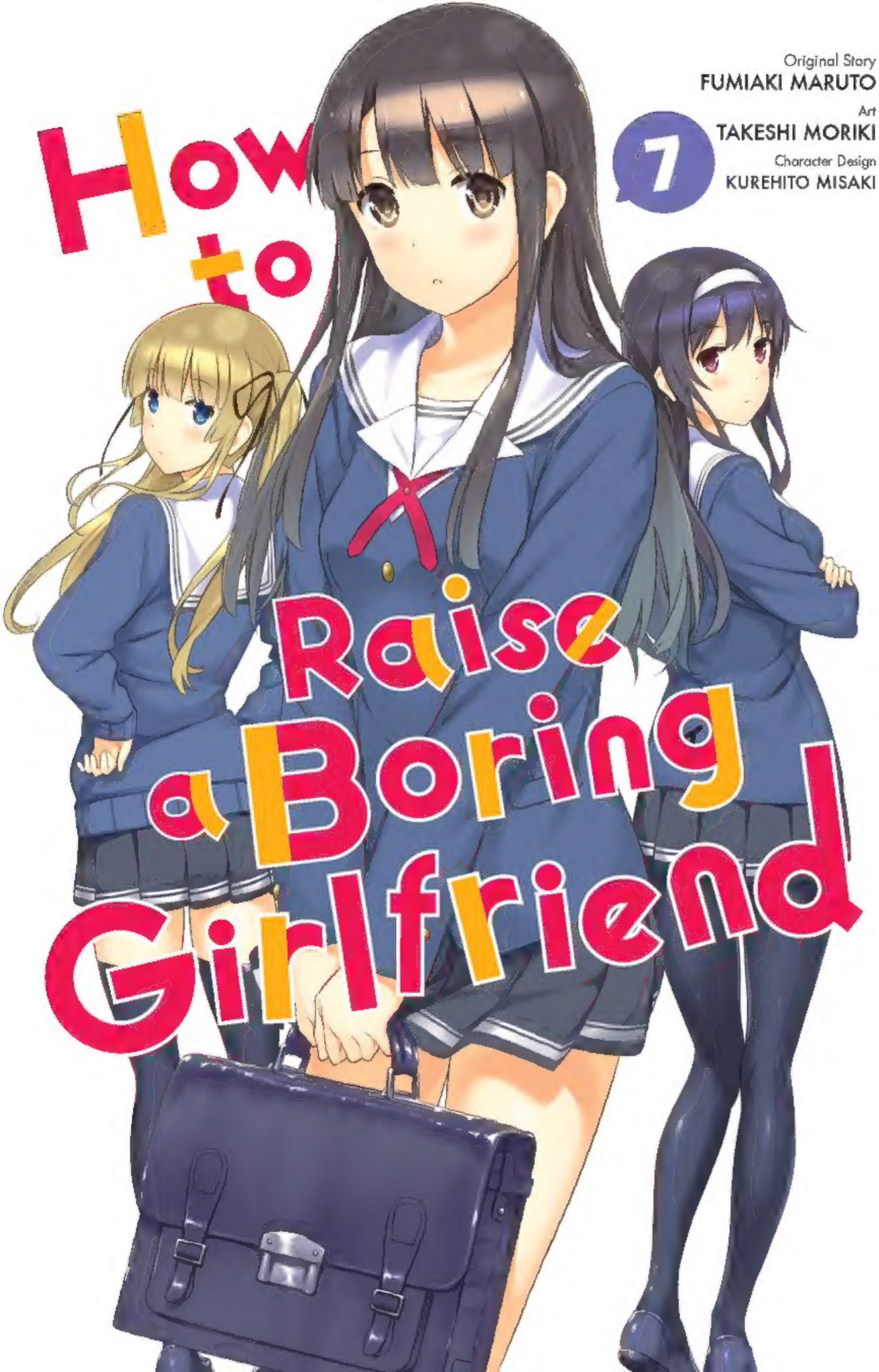
How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend
7
Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO
Art
TAKESHI MORIKI
Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise
a Boring
Girlfriend

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How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

7

Original Story
FUMIAKI MARUTO

Art
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Character Design
KUREHITO MISAKI

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

Volume Seven

Presented by
Fumiaki Maruto &
Takeshi Moriki

Character Design by
Kurehito Misaki

I'M SORRY, TOMO-KUN...

KOFF! KOFF!

I'M SORRY.

KAH!

I'M SO...

...SORRY.

HAKK!

I COULDN'T ...

...KEEP MY PROMISE.

KOFF!

'COS ERIRI IS...

IT'S FINE! SO DON'T CRY.

I'LL BE RIGHT HERE WITH YOU ALL DAY.

MMF...

ERIRI ...!

...OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

HAVING THE SAME DREAM ...

WAKING UP OVER AND OVER...

HUH !?

H-HELLO !?

It's all done!

It's done! The grand route!

Incoming Call

Eriri Sawamura

!

...!

ERIRI?

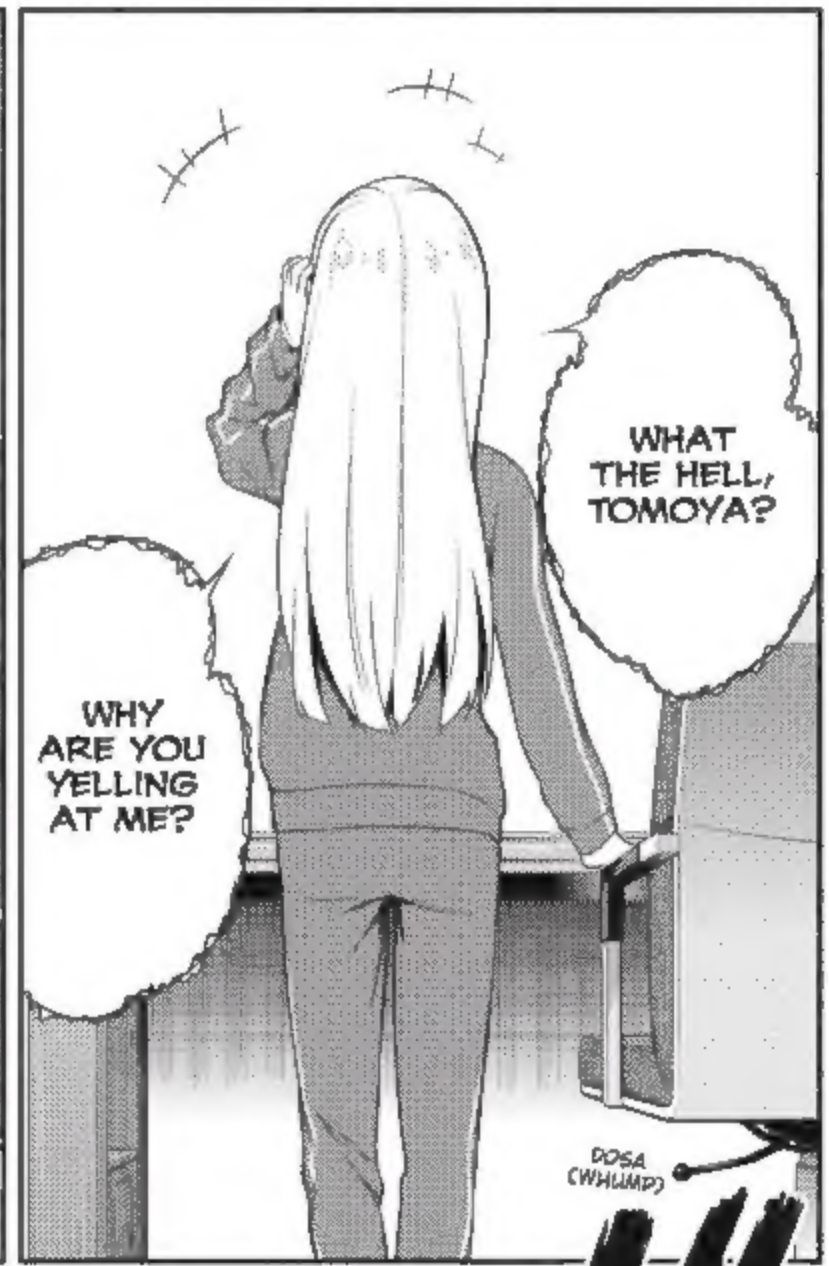
I did it! A spectacular new record!

The roughs, the line art, the coloring— I got it all done in a day and a half! Seven whole pieces!

HANG ON...YOU MEAN—

WAIT! HOLD ON A SEC!

WHY IS YOUR VOICE ALL HOARSE !?



...THE TYPE WHO'D SOON WIND UP DEAD IF LEFT ON HER OWN.
ERIRI ...?

CHAPTER
33

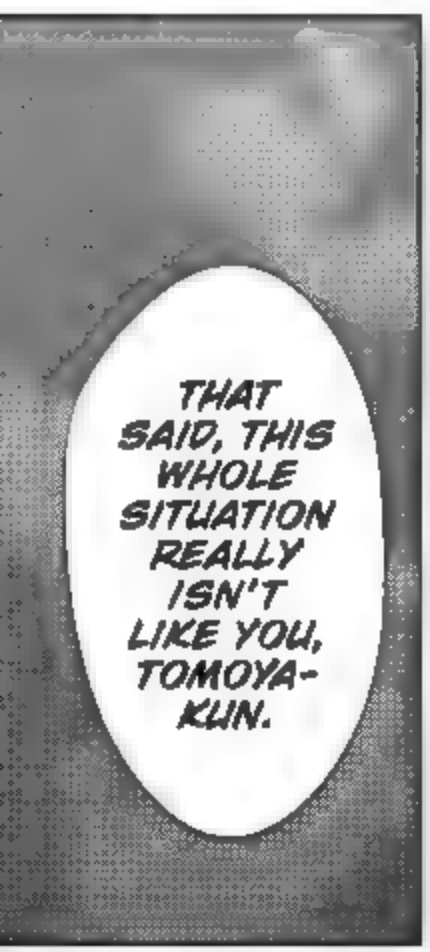
SO SHE'S AT HER VACATION HOME IN THE NASU HIGHLAND ALONE...

...AND NOW SHE'S SICK TO BOOT.

I SEE.

H-HI... I'M AKI.
ENAKA-SAN IS ACTUALLY A LICENSED TAX ACCOUNTANT AND HANDLES TAX MATTERS FOR OUR DOUJIN CIRCLE.
THEY'VE GOT THEIR OWN BMW WITH A DRIVER AND STUFF? GEEZ, THE BIG CIRCLES ARE REALLY SOMETHING ELSE.

SO, HAVE YOU CONTACTED SAWAMURA'S FAMILY?
ABOUT THE EXACT ADDRESS, HOW TO GET INTO THE RESIDENCE, ET CETERA? DO YOU HAVE ALL THE DETAILS?
...I'LL BE SURE TO CALL THEM BY THE TIME WE ARRIVE THERE.


THAT SAID, THIS WHOLE SITUATION REALLY ISN'T LIKE YOU, TOMOYA-KUN.

.....
THANKS.
OH, ALSO, ENAKA-SAN HAS PICKED OUT A CHANGE OF CLOTHES AND UNDERWEAR.
I GOT SOME GENERIC MEDICINE TOO... BUT WHEN WE ARRIVE, WE'D BEST CALL A DOCTOR.
SUCH ATTENTIVE-NESS...IT'S AGGRAVATING, BUT HE REALLY IS A CAPABLE GUY.

I'M NOT AS LEVEL-HEADED ON THE JOB AS YOU.

I WONDER. I'D HAVE THOUGHT YOU'D MAKE SURE THAT'S COVERED.

YOU'D GO TO FRIENDS FOR HELP OR TRY TO NEGOTIATE THINGS.

I JUST DIDN'T EXPECT MY ARTIST TO GET SICK AND COLLAPSE.

BUT THAT'S EXACTLY WHY YOU'VE SHOWN STRENGTH IN LAST-MINUTE CRISES, STRENGTH I COULD NEVER IMAGINE. ISN'T THAT WHY YOU'VE COME THIS FAR?

YOU'RE NOT GRACEFUL AT ALL, MORE FRANTIC AND SWEATY.

THAT IS TRUE. YOU AND I ARE DIFFERENT.

IF YOU KNOW THAT...

JUST THE SHEER AMOUNT OF IT ALL.

IZUMI TOLD ME... ABOUT YOUR SCENARIOS AND MUSIC AND EVENT CG.

...EH?

MOST PEOPLE WOULD HAVE GROUND TO A HALT BEFORE THEY KNEW IT...

GOOD GRIEF. WHAT'S WRONG WITH YOU?

YOU'RE A CIRCLE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS DOING IT FOR KICKS.

IT'S NOT FOR KICKS...

GIRI (GRIT)

INDEED. YOU'RE ALWAYS UNBELIEVABLY EARNEST.

SO WHAT'S DIFFERENT NOW?

?

THE TRUTH IS, THIS IS NOT THE TIME OR PLACE TO BE HEADING FOR THE NASU HIGHLAND.

YOU SHOULD BE DELEGATING THAT TASK TO YOUR OTHER MEMBERS SO YOU CAN STAY AT HOME AND WORK TOWARD YOUR GOLD MASTER.

WHY DIDN'T YOU DO THAT?

RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE NOT LOOKING TOWARD WINTER COMIKET IN EARNEST.

JUST WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU SO OCCUPIED WITH?

KATOU...

I'VE... TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF HER WAY TOO MUCH.

...GETS ALONG HORRIBLY WITH UTAHA-SENPAI.

SHE...

SHE COMPLETELY HATES MICHIRU.

IF IT CAN'T BE DONE, IT CAN'T BE DONE!

One hundred meters to destination.

NO .....!

WHEN IT COMES TO ERIRI SAWAMURA, YOU WANT TO KEEP HER ALL TO YOURSELF. THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK.

WELL, THEN.
LET'S EACH DO OUR BEST TO FULFILL WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE.

こひゅうう

HNFFF...

HNNN...

ひゅうう

WELL, WE'LL BE OFF THEN.

TOMOYA-KUN, LISTEN...

FIND A WAY TO PULL IT OFF SOMEHOW BEFORE THEN.

IORI...

IF YOU GET IN GEAR NOW, YOU MIGHT JUST BARELY MAKE IT IN TIME.

OR CONTACT YOUR OTHER CIRCLE MEMBERS AND GET THEM TO COMPLETE THE MASTER IN TOKYO.

YOU CAN MAKE YOUR MASTER HERE AND TAKE THE FIRST TRAIN BACK TO TOKYO.

IT'S NOTHING, REALLY.

...SORRY.

PROBLEMS THAT CAN BE SOLVED THROUGH MONEY OR DIPLOMACY ARE NO TROUBLE AT ALL...

LATER.

BATAN (SHUT)

I'M SORRY, EVERY-ONE.

I'M SORRY, KATOU.

...I'M SORRY, IORI.

(VIOOOO WHOOHH)

I'M SORRY...FOR WHAT I'M ABOUT TO DO.

HE SAID IT'S PROBABLY THE FLU.

SOME HOURS LATER

.....

NO WAY! THIS IS THE WORST!

YEAH. YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO GO HOME FOR A WHILE.

SERI-OUSLY !?

I WAS PLANNING TO BINGE WATCH ALL THE ANIME I'D SAVED UP, BUY TONS OF YEAR-END-SALE GAMES...

...AND HAVE A TWENTY-FOUR-HOUR NET CAFÉ MARATHON!

AGH! DAMN IT!

AND AFTER I FINALLY FINISHED ALL THE ART!

ぽ PON

ぽ PON

ぽ PON (PAFF)

.....
RIGHT NOW, YOU JUST WORRY ABOUT GETTING WELL.
...TO-MOYA ?
.....
DID YOU FINISH THE GAME?
WHAT ABOUT THE MASTERING?
...AND SENT IT OFF, RIGHT?
YOU INSERTED MY ART INTO THE GAME, DEBUGGED IT...
GUGU (CREAK)
YOU BEING HERE MEANS IT WENT OKAY, RIGHT?
SO YOU COMPLETED THE GAME, RIGHT, TOMOYA...?
I GOT THE ART ALL DONE, YOU KNOW?

...YOU ABANDONED THE MASTERING TO COME HERE...?

DON'T TELL ME...

...YOU...

IT WAS THE MOST OBVIOUS CHOICE.

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU THINK-IIINNGG !?

YOU COLLAPSED! YOU'VE GOT THE FLU!

IF IT'S BETWEEN A SICK PERSON AND A SOFTWARE DEAD-LINE, IT'S A GIVEN WHICH I'D CHOOSE!

ERI...!

HAKK!

AKK!

URGH!

LEAVE...! ...FINISH THE GAME! SEND IT OFF...!

HFF!

GO BACK...! NOW...!

KOFF!

OBVIOUSLY, YOU HAVE TO CHOOSE BOTH!

KOFF! KAHH!

GAH!

IT JUST MEANS A FULLY PACKAGED VERSION WON'T BE READY IN TIME FOR WINTER COMIKET...

IT'S PRACTICALLY FINISHED. WHAT DOES IT MATTER WHEN WE RELEASE IT?

UNH...

AH...

DO YOU WANT TO THROW AWAY EVERY-ONE'S PAST SIX MONTHS!?

KOFF!

DO YOU WANT TO MAKE MY PAST WEEK MEAN NOTH-ING!?

HFF! HFF!

WAAAAHHH!

AAAAAAHHH!

AFTER THAT, WE DIDN'T TALK FOR EIGHT YEARS, SO I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHE WAS LIKE GROWING UP.

WHEN SHE WAS LITTLE, ERIRI WAS A SICKLY CHILD...WHEN I THINK BACK, ALL THAT COMES UP IS HER IN HER PAJAMAS...

THAT'S WHY I HAVE NO FAITH IN HER HEALTH.

...EVEN AT CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR...

...THE TYPE WHO'D SOON WIND UP DEAD IF LEFT ON HER OWN.

WAAAAAH!

GAAAAH!

'COS ERIRI IS...

NGH...

URRGH...

NNF... GUH...

KH...

WE'LL JUST BE A LITTLE BIT LATE. IT WON'T TARNISH THE VALUE OF OUR PROJECT ONE BIT.

AND WE CAN STILL BE AT THE WINTER COMIKET. IT JUST MEANS FEWER COPIES.

HEY, COME ON. THAT'S ENOUGH. STOP CRYING.

WHOSE FAULT IS IT...!?

GUH...

URK! KOFF!

THERE'S NO NEED TO FIGHT ANYMORE.

YOUR ART HAS BECOME AMAZING...

.....HUH?

THE ART YOU DREW.

I SAW IT.

URR...

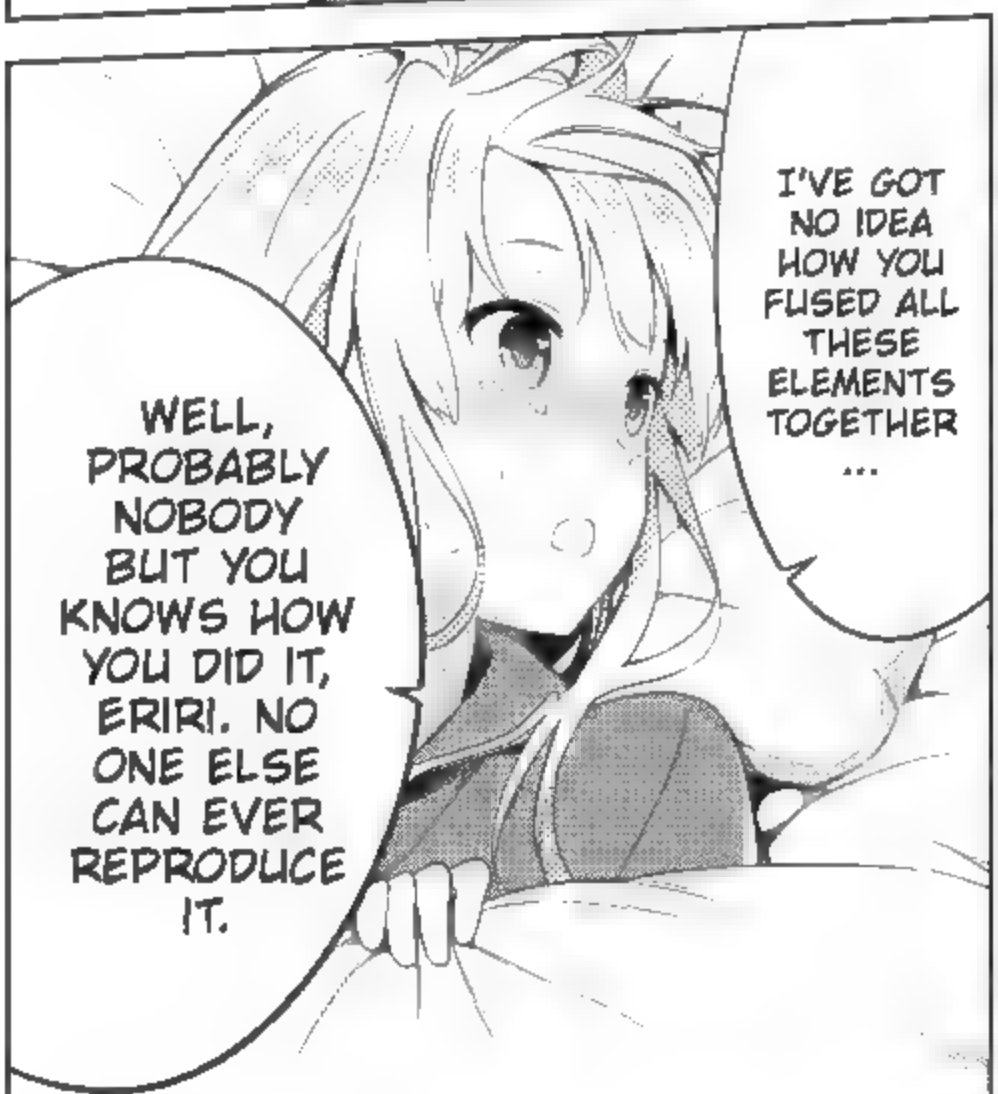
BUT, I'LL LOSE...

...TO HER...TO IZUMI...

...TO "ROUGE EN ROUGE."

OF ALL THE ART I'VE SEEN FROM YOU THIS YEAR...

...IT HIT THE MARK BETTER THAN ANY OTHER.



あいす

PAAAAA (BEAM)

MM-HM!

GABA (WHUD)

S-SO...

...YOU THINK MY ART...

...IS MORE AMAZING THAN HER ART?

あ

あ

あ

!

I DIDN'T SAY ALL THAT, YOU MORON!

I BEAT UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA...!

I BEAT IZUMI HASHIMA AND MICHIRU HYOUDOU...!

I DID IT! I WON!

HERE, TAKE YOUR MEDICINE!

HA HA HA HA HA!

BUT IT REALLY WAS AMAZING ...

AND YET...

"SHE DOESN'T NEED TO BORROW STRENGTH FROM ME ANYMORE."

"WHEN IT COMES TO ERIRI SAWAMURA, YOU WANT TO KEEP HER ALL TO YOURSELF. THAT'S ALL I CAN THINK."

"YOU LACK TRUE TALENT!" "BUT RIGHT NOW, YOU'RE LACKING! YOU'RE NOT AWESOME!"

'COS ERIRI HAS BECOME BEYOND AMAZING.

YES. IT'S TRUE, IORI.

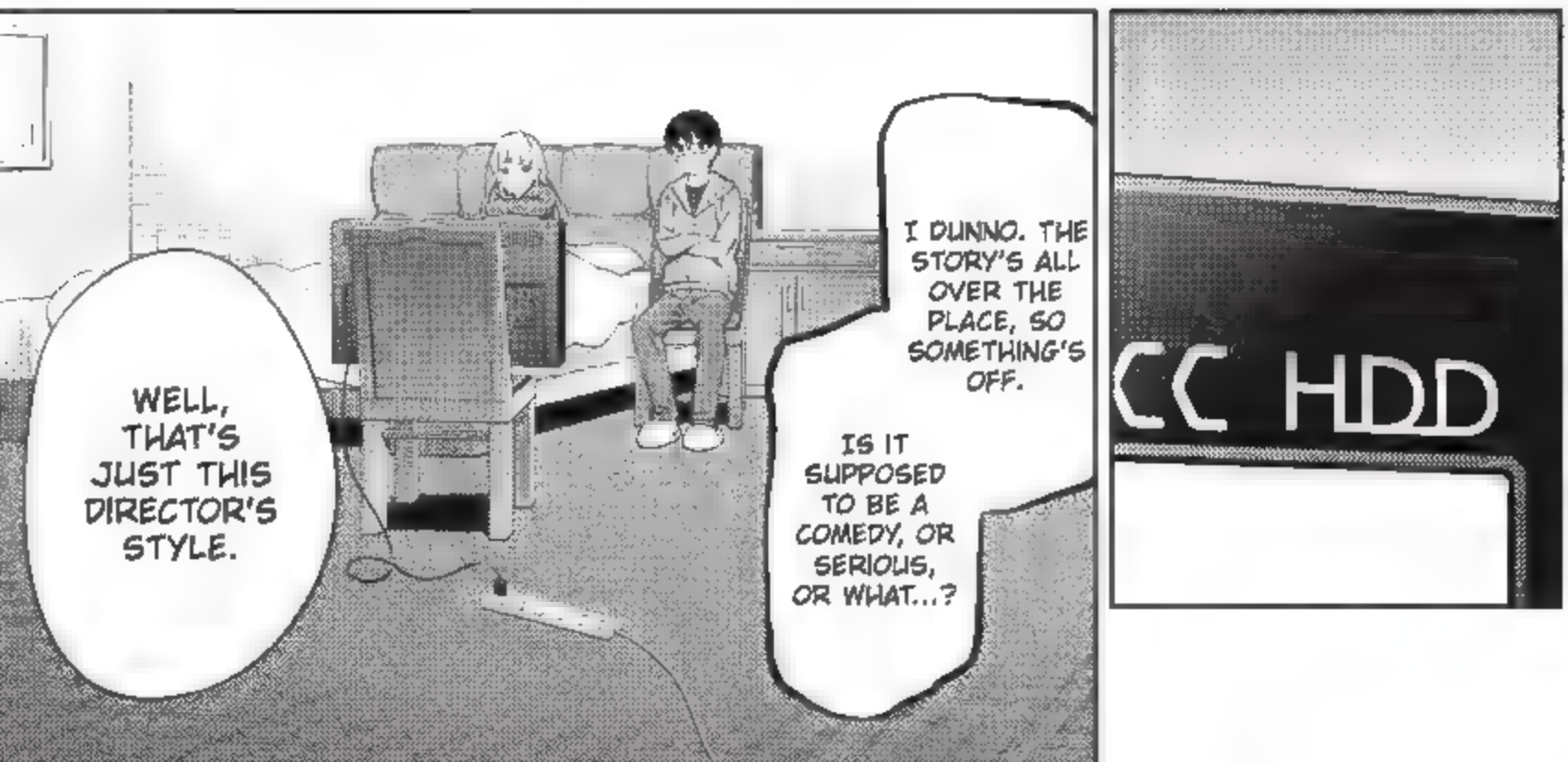
AN EMOTION WELLED UP IN ME, SOMETHING THE OPPOSITE OF "I WANT TO SEE HER SELL."

...AND FURTHER AWAY.

...FURTHER...

...YOU'RE GETTING...

HEY...



I'VE GOTTA GET THIS SEASON'S SHOWS OUT OF THE WAY FIRST, NO MATTER WHAT.

IF I DON'T WATCH THEM NOW, I FEEL LIKE I'LL NEVER GET TO THE LAST EPISODE AS LONG AS I LIVE.

SAY, SHALL WE WATCH *THE SNOW*? IT'S BEEN A WHILE. I ACTUALLY STOPPED AT EPISODE SEVEN.

SO, WHICH SHOULD WE WATCH NEXT?

WE'VE BASICALLY SEEN EVERY-THING THAT AIRED THIS WEEK.

WE DIDN'T TALK ABOUT WINTER COMIKET AGAIN.

AFTER THAT, ERIRI SLEPT FOR ABOUT FIVE HOURS. THEN, WE WATCHED ANIME NONSTOP.

YOU DOUJIN ARTISTS WHO ONLY DO BEST SELLERS ARE REALLY SOME-THING ELSE.

AND YET YOU DREW TWO EROTIC DOUJIN BOOKS BASED ON IT...?

1:15 P.M.

.....

ACTU-ALLY, WHAT TIME IS IT NOW?

...IORI OFFERED TO ME.

Printing

0-000-0000

No later than 1:00 P.m.

I COM-PLETELY MISSED THE DEAD-LINE...

PUFLO

パフルン

FU (HSS)

...HAVE YOU EVER COOKED BEFORE?

TOMO-YA...

I CAN DECLARE THAT I'VE HAD MORE OPPOR-TUNITIES TO SPEND TIME IN A KITCHEN THAN YOU HAVE.

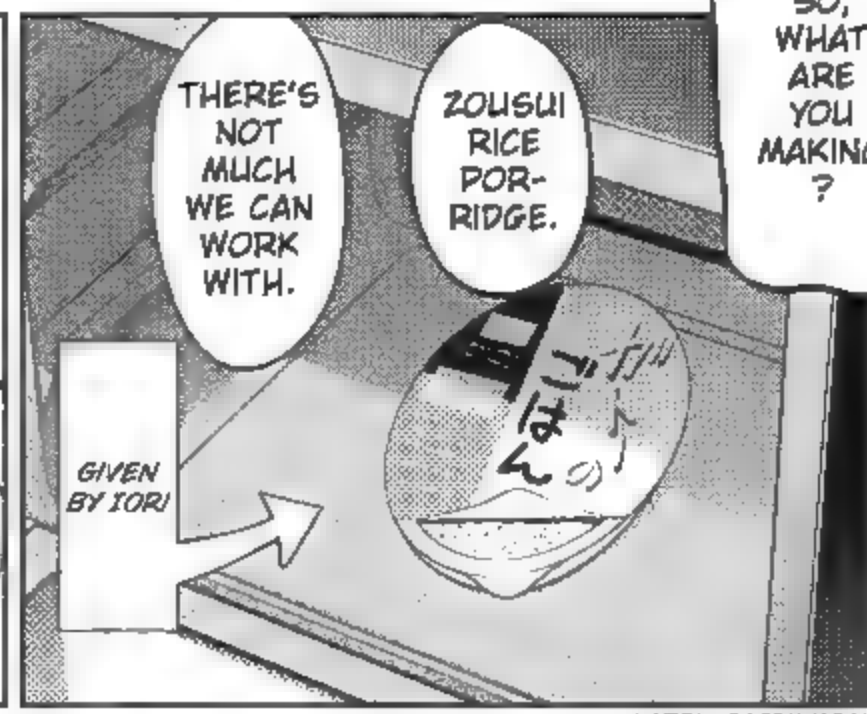
SO GET BACK TO YOUR ROOM AND INTO BED.

I'M A BIT WORRIED ABOUT WHAT KIND OF LETHAL FOOD YOU'RE GOING TO MAKE US.

DOON (DOOM)

IT'S ALL JUST PEYOU○G AND TONKOTSU RAMEN!

AFTER ALL, THERE'S STILL PLENTY OF FOOD LEFT.



LABEL: GATOU MEAL

NO!

STOP THAT! NOW, EAT!

NO WAY!

EAT UP!

YOU WON'T GET BETTER WITHOUT NOURISH-MENT!

QUIT TALKING LIKE A BABY!

(KAGI (STERN)

!

DOKI (THUMP)

I'M DOING THIS FOR YOUR SAKE.

DO YOU REALLY NEED ME TO EAT THAT BAD?

YOU'RE SUCH A PAIN!

KAAAA (BLUSH)

If—

If...

...well, then I guess I could eat it...

If you feed me...

W—

WELL, IF YOU'RE GOING THAT FAR...

...I'LL EAT IT UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS.

CONDI-TIONS?

GAH! WHA—?

BON (POOP)

ARE YOU DELIRIOUS OR SOMETHING!?

BOSHUAAAAAA (STEAM)

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S SICK.

HERE!

SAY "AAH"!

TEXT: INSTANT RESPONSE

KAPU (CHOMP)

AAH...

...MM.

TOMOYA! BREAK-FAST!

LABEL: TONKOTSU

WHO'D EAT THAT FIRST THING IN THE MORNING?

HAKK!

KOFF!

...DON' WAN' IT.

AND I CAUGHT IT.

DELISH!

THE DOCTOR WHO VISITED BEFORE SAID ERIRI HAD "A SIMPLE COLD"

I've seriously got no appetite.

HUH? BUT THEN, JUST WHO WAS IT SAYING, "A SICK PERSON NEEDS TO EAT NO MATTER WHAT"?

NIKA (SMILE)

にか

!

SURE, SURE.

PUT AN EGG IN IT AT LEAST...

HEY. DON'T WE HAVE ANY UDON OR SOBA?

ONCE YOU'VE EATEN ALL THIS, I'LL MAKE YOU SOME NABEYAKI HOT POT UDON! ONE I JUST HAVE TO HEAT UP!

THIS FEELING OF WARMTH AND SAFETY FROM SOMEBODY RIGHT BESIDE ME, WATCHING OVER ME.

...COME TO THINK OF IT, HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE I HAD THIS?

OH...

GUU (HFFF)

DID ERIRI... FEEL LIKE THIS BACK THEN TOO...?

SELVICE'S CHRISTMAS EVENT ISN'T VERY SPECTACULAR, IS IT.

AND SO...

...I SPENT SEVERAL DAYS WITH ERIRI...

AND BEFORE I REALIZED IT, THERE CAME A DAY...

YOU BECOME A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT PERSON WHEN IT COMES TO *SELVICE*. IT'S SCARY...

I WON'T FORGIVE ANYONE WHO DISSES SELVICE, NOT EVEN YOU, TOMOYA!

SAY WHAT!? WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT!?

THE SEQUENCE IS DELIBERATELY UNIMPRESSIVE SO THERE'S ROOM FOR THE PLAYERS' OWN FANTASIES!

WHEN WE GET BACK, I'M GOING TO APOLOGIZE TO EVERYONE.

TO MEGUMI, HYOUDOU-SAN, AND...

...EVEN TO UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA. YOU'LL SEE.

...OKAY.

I'LL APOLOGIZE ALONG WITH YOU.

SO DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT TOO MUCH.

NO. LET ME DO IT MYSELF.

ERIRI...

IT WAS MY FAULT...

BUT IT...

'COS IT'S MY CRIME, MY RESPON-SIBILITY...

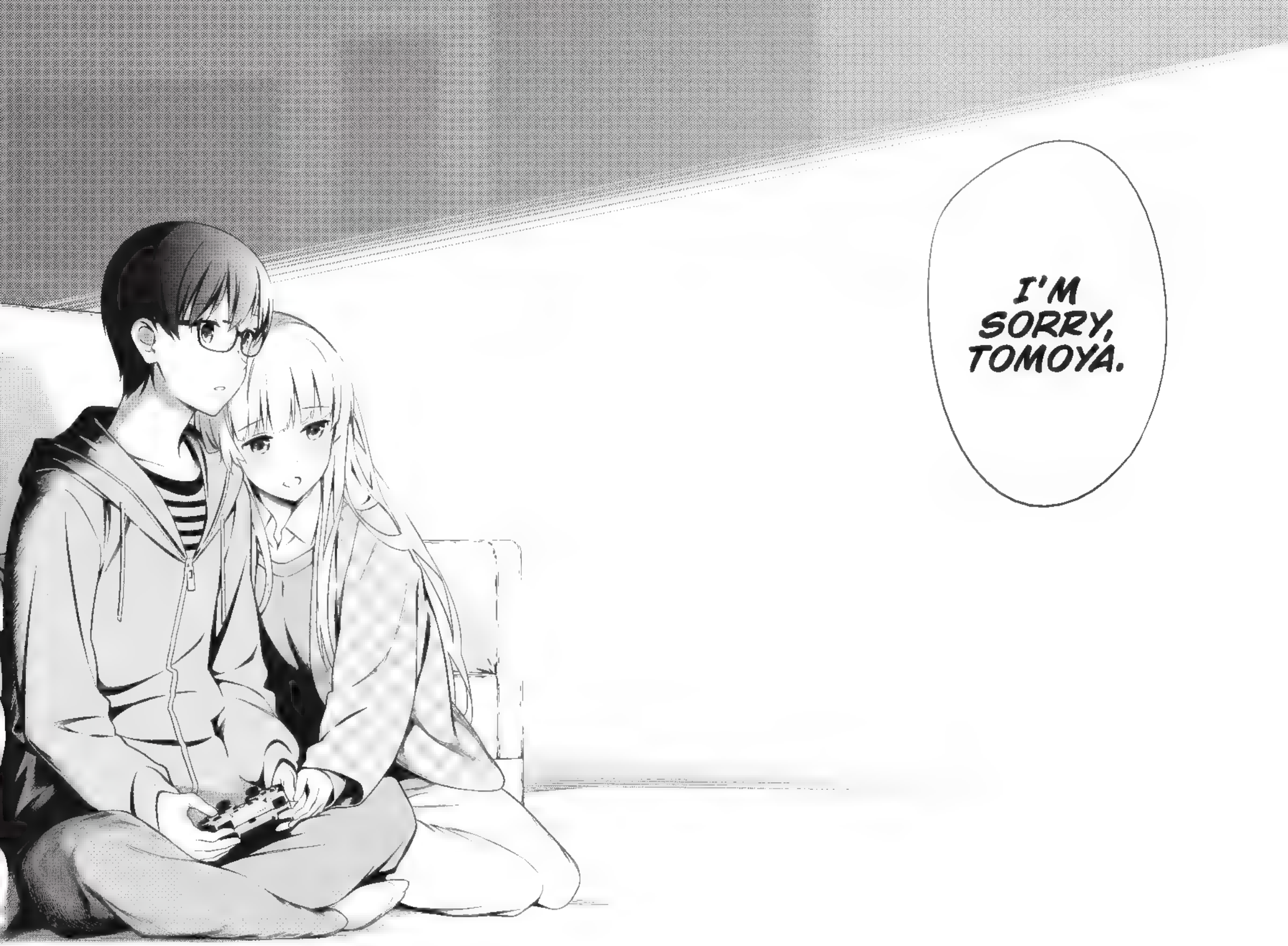
I GOT SO OBSESSED WITH THE QUALITY AND BLEW EVERYONE ELSE'S GOALS...

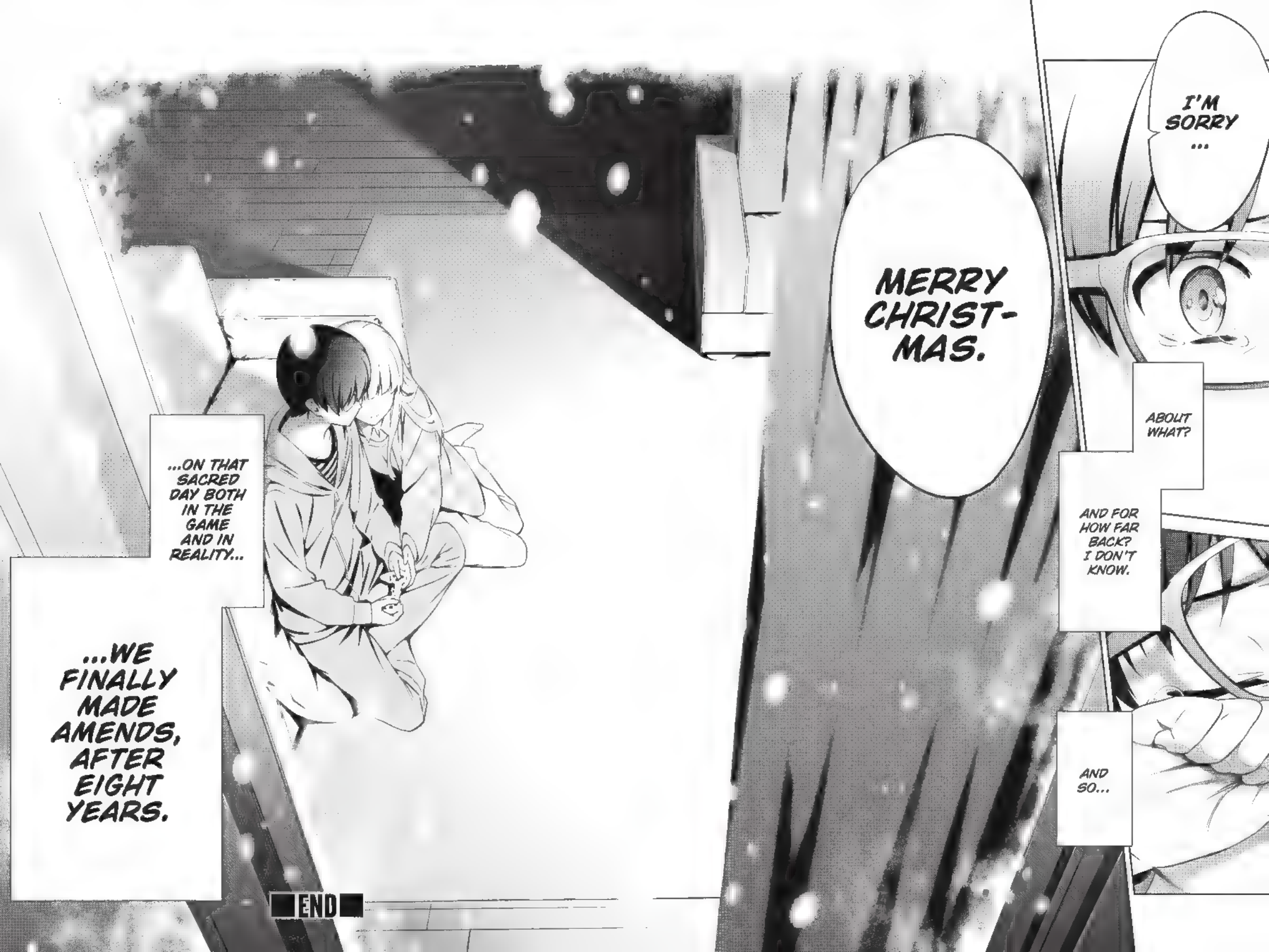
AFTER ALL, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME IN MY LIFE I EVER MISSED A DEADLINE...

...AND ...

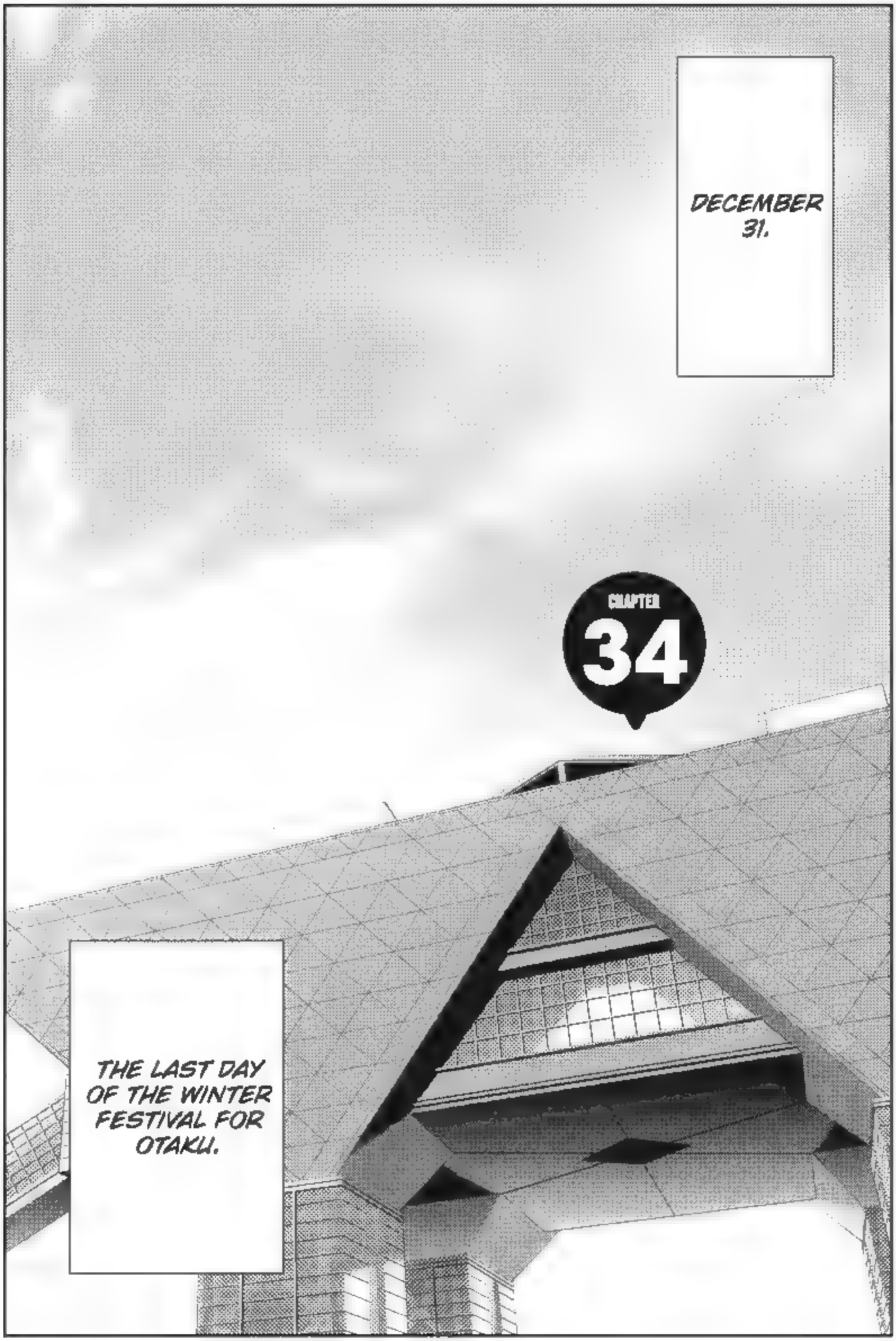
...MY PRIDE.

...THOUGH, IF I TOLD THEM THAT, EVERYBODY'D PROBABLY SLAP ME.
RIGHT?
WELL, ACTUALLY, I SHOULD SLAP ERIRI...
...AND THEN EVERYONE ELSE SHOULD SLAP ME.
TON (THUD)
SU (SHIFF)
?


I'M SORRY, TOMOYA.


I'M SORRY ...
MERRY CHRIST-MAS.
ABOUT WHAT?
AND FOR HOW FAR BACK? I DON'T KNOW.
AND SO...
...ON THAT SACRED DAY BOTH IN THE GAME AND IN REALITY...
...WE FINALLY MADE AMENDS, AFTER EIGHT YEARS.
END

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend


DECEMBER 31.
CHAPTER 34
THE LAST DAY OF THE WINTER FESTIVAL FOR OTAKU.

SIGN: EAST A-34B

SEEMS PRETTY SAD COMPARED TO THE OTHER STALLS AROUND.

I SEE... SO THIS IS ALL WE HAVE.

GUH ...!

COVER: BIJU'S ROOM

URRR ...

PLUS, IT'S ON HOME-BURNED MEDIA, IN A PLAIN CASE, AND THE MANUAL IS A SINGLE PAGE IN BLACK AND WHITE.

WELL, WE ONLY MADE ONE HUNDRED COPIES AFTER ALL.

LABEL: CHERRY BLESSING: THE TALE OF A TRAVELING BLESSING

cherry blessing

～巡る恵みの物語～

blessing software

WE FINALLY FINISHED OUR GAME...

ORIGINALLY, WE HAD PLANNED FOR OVER A THOUSAND COPIES.

BUT TO AVOID BEDLAM, WE DIDN'T LIST THE NAMES ERI KASHIWAGI OR UTAKO TAKI ON THE SITE, AND WE LIMITED IT TO A SIMPLE INTRODUCTION TO THE GAME...

*ONLY ONE COPY PER CUSTOMER PER PURCHASE ALLOWED.

YOU DON'T MAKE IT SOUND "DONE" OR "IN THE PAST" AT ALL. IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING IT AGAINST ME...

WELL, WHAT'S DONE IS DONE. ALTHOUGH, WITH ALL THIS ATTENTION ON US, I DO FEEL SOME PHYSICAL DANGER FOR US SELLING IT.

ON RESERVE

50 COPIES

OH, COME ON! IT'S IN THE PAST NOW, ISN'T IT?

KATOU ...

AKI-KUN, YOU'VE ALREADY APOLOGIZED PLENTY.

YOUR HAIR...?

?

BUT IF YOU FEEL THAT WAY, AKI-KUN, I WONDER IF MAYBE IT'S 'COS OF THIS.

NOT NOW.

OH. REALLY ?

NO, I DIDN'T MEAN TO IMPLY ANYTHING LIKE THAT.

'COS I'M HERE WITH OUR CIRCLE!

WHY ARE YOU GOING UNDER?

FASA (FWISH)

I WONDER WHO YOU COULD HAVE IN MIND.

SEE, MAYBE THIS HAIR CONJURES UP THE IMAGE OF SOMEONE WHO STUBBORNLY HOLDS ON TO A GRUDGE...

YEAH. FOISTING THE WORK ONTO US AND WANDERING OFF FOR A STROLL IS PRETTY DARN IRRESPONSIBLE!

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? WE'RE DONE SETTING UP ALREADY!

I HAPPENED TO SEE AN ACQUAINTANCE AND JUST STOPPED TO SAY "HI."

GOSO (RUSTLE)

CARD: KOUSAKA

INDIFFERENT

無関心

SO, HOW MANY MORE HOURS UNTIL CLOSING TIME?

YOU KNOW, IT BOTHERS ME HOW THAT'S ALL YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT RIGHT FROM THE START.

AND WHAT TIME CAN WE START OUR CLOSING PARTY?

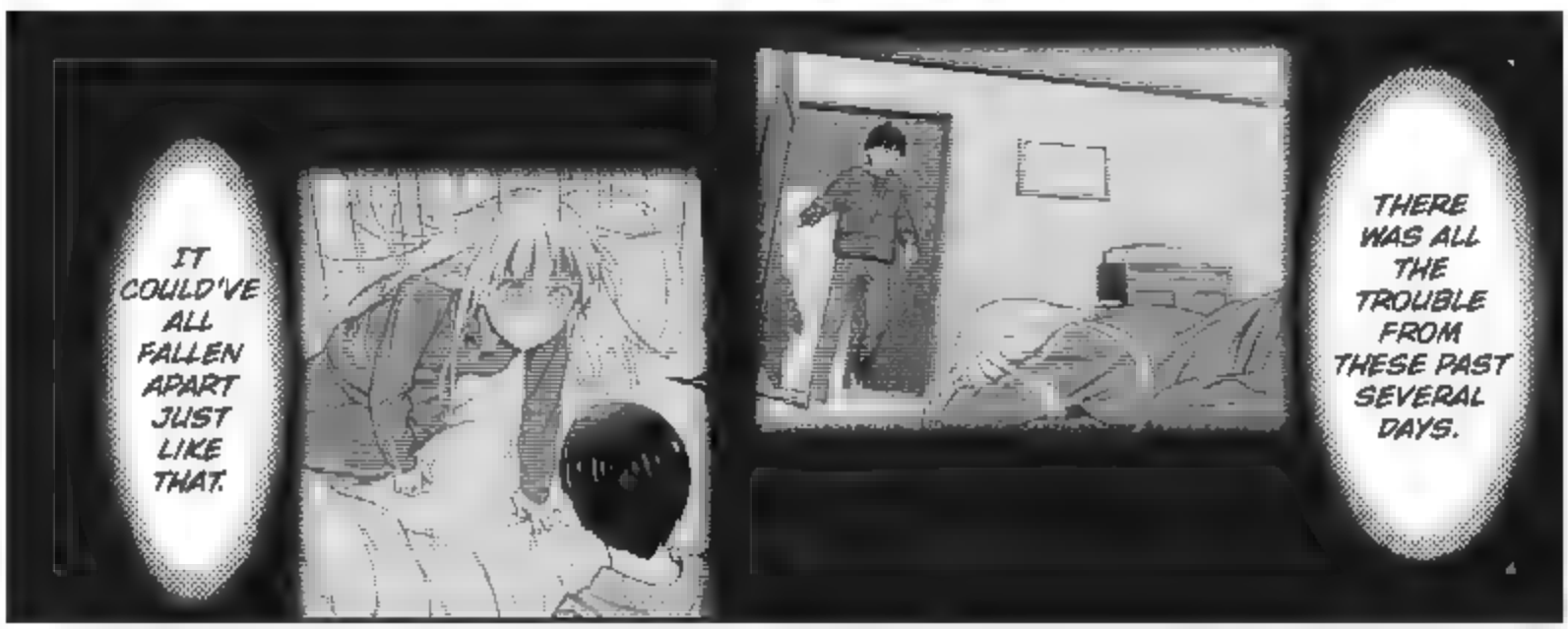
AFTER ALL, IT'S HER FIRST TIME...

... ATTENDING A DOUJINSHI MARKET.

EVEN THOUGH I COULDN'T EVEN GET ENOUGH READY TO SELL.

KATOU AND MICHIRU...

...THEY CAME TOGETHER FOR ME, FOR THE CIRCLE'S SAKE.



BUT SOMEONE WITH AN OVERSIZED FIGURE AND ATTITUDE REALLY HAS A MUCH DIFFERENT PRESENCE, EH, UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA?
UHH...ERIRI WENT TO SUBMIT OUR REGISTRATION AND SAMPLE...
BY THE WAY, I DON'T SEE THE HARD-TO-SPOT YOU-KNOW-WHO WITH THE FLIMSY FIGURE AND FLIMSY PERSONALITY ANYWHERE.
cherry blossing
APPARENTLY, THEY WON'T ACCEPT IT UNLESS WE USE ONE.
HEY, TOMOYA. WHAT THE HECK IS A "SAMPLE STICKER"?
TELL ME AGAIN HOW MANY EVENTS YOU'VE BEEN TO BEFORE ...?

YOU'RE THE ONE PERSON I DON'T WANT TO HEAR THAT FROM!

BUT THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HAD TO DO ALL THIS OTHER STUFF MYSELF!

THINGS ARE REALLY... BACK TO NORMAL ...

HOPELESS AS EVER, AREN'T YOU?

DOKA (WHUMP)

SIGN: COFFEE SPOT, KAMEDA CAFÉ

I'M SORRY!

I'M SORRY THAT I PREVENTED YOUR SCENARIO FROM BEING RELEASED TO THE WORLD AS A COMPLETE GAME!

I'M SORRY I STOPPED IT FROM BEING RELEASED TO A WIDER AUDIENCE!

SAWA-MURA-SAN...

I'M SORRY FOR HURTING THE CAREER OF UTAKO KASUMI!

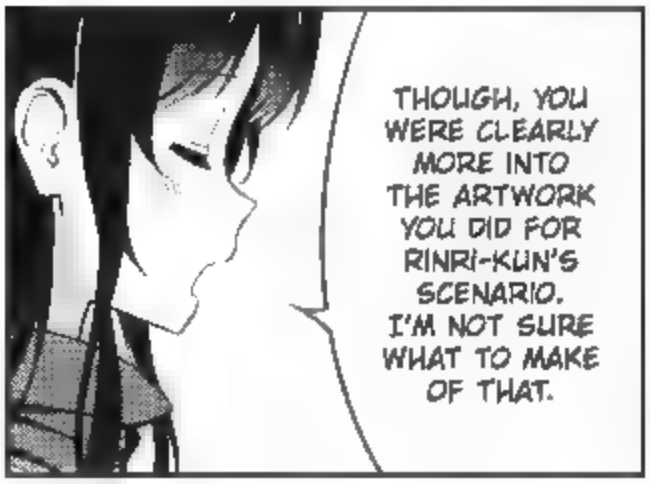
.....
...THE "UTAKO KASUMI" BRAND NAME WON'T BE HURT BY SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
ACTU-ALLY...
BUT—

...THE PEN NAME FOR THE LOVEY-DOVEY COLLABO-RATION BETWEEN RINRI-KUN AND ME.
PLUS, MY CREDIT ON THIS PROJECT IS "UTAKO TAKI"...
GIRI (GRIT)

NO! OF COURSE N...
OH! DID YOU GRIND YOUR TEETH JUST NOW?

ANYWAY, YOU COMPLETED ALL YOUR WORK, DIDN'T YOU?

WE GOT ALL THE ART WE NEEDED FROM YOU, RIGHT?



I'M KIND OF HAPPY WE WORKED WITH THE WRITER OF "METRONOME IN LOVE"...

YOUR SCENARIO WAS VERY INTEREST-ING TOO.

IT'S SORT OF A STRANGE FEELING TO SEE MY ART ATTACHED TO IT.

IN THAT CASE, CAN WE PUT AN END TO THIS CONVER-SATION?

WE BOTH WORKED HARD AND PRODUCED A FINE WORK OF ART.

ISN'T THAT GOOD ENOUGH?

IF RINRI-KUN IS OKAY WITH IT, THEN I'VE GOT NO COMPLAINTS EITHER.

THAT'S NOT MY FAULT. THAT'S UNJUSTIFIED RESENTMENT ...

OH, NEVER MIND.

ONLY, NOW I'LL HAVE TO LIVE WITH THE HEARTBREAK OF THINKING, "WHAT YOU SAID TO HER IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT THAN WHAT YOU SAID TO ME, YOU TWO-TONGUED BASTARD!"

?

ERR, WELL, OR SHOULD I SAY...

TH-THANK YOU.

WELL, WITH THAT SAID, NOW CAN WE ACTUALLY END THIS CONVER-SATION...

...SAWA-MURA-SAN?

SINCE WE'RE AT THIS STAGE, I CAN BE HONEST. WHEN I READ "METRONOME IN LOVE" THE FIRST TIME, I—

THANK YOU, UTAKO KASUMI... SENPAI.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING!?

ROOON (BAM)

DON'T GET SO FULL OF YOURSELF, UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA!

OH, AND LET ME WARN YOU— I ONLY DO ONE AUTOGRAPH PER PERSON AND ONLY ON BOOKS PURCHASED ON-SITE, SO...

COME. NOW. WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT SHY SMILE FROM BEFORE? THERE WAS SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO SAY TO ME, RIGHT?

DON'T MIND ME. PLEASE, CONTINUE.

YOU SEE, I...
UM, MICHIRU HYOUDOU...
NO, HYOUDOU-SAN...
YOU DON'T REALLY NEED TO APOLOGIZE TO ME FOR ANYTHING.
IT'S JUST A VIDEO GAME, AND AN AMATEUR ONE TO BOOT!
BUT FOR YOU, THIS GAME IS YOUR DEBUT AS A SONGWRITER.

I DON'T HAVE ANY INTEREST IN OTAKU CRAP...

...WELL, I'M ONLY SPEAKING FROM MY OWN EXPERIENCE.

...EVEN IF IT'S A DOUJIN WORK.

BUT THE FIRST WORK YOU PUT OUT INTO THE WORLD IS ONE OF THE TREASURES OF YOUR LIFETIME...

TOMO IS THIS CIRCLE'S REP IN THE FIRST PLACE. THAT MEANS, WHATEVER HAPPENS, TOMO'S THE ONLY ONE WHO'S ACCOUNTABLE, RIGHT?

TOMO TOLD ME YOU WERE BEHIND BECAUSE YOU WERE LAID UP IN BED SICK.

ANYWAY, YOU ACTUALLY MADE IT IN TIME, DIDN'T YOU?

IT'S LIKE YOU'RE FORCING THE IDEA THAT YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S CLOSEST TO TOMO.

NO. THAT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT TO ME.

H-HOW COME?

...THAT SOMEHOW MAKES IT SOUND WORSE!

EVEN SO, MY ONLY CHOICE IS TO APOLOGIZE FOR THIS INCIDENT.

I AM SORRY, HYOUDOU-SAN...

...I WASN'T IMPLYING THAT AT ALL...

EXACTLY. TOMO DOESN'T BELONG TO YOU, AND THAT'S WHY YOU'VE GOT THE WRONG IDEA.

I KEEP TELLING YOU— THERE'S NO POINT IN APOLOGIZING!

PORI

PORI (SCRATCH)

GAN (SHOCK)

WHA ...!?

BUT I DON'T INTEND TO APOLOGIZE FOR ANYTHING ELSE!

AS IF HE'LL BE THAT CLOSE WITH SOME COUSIN HE ONLY SEES ONCE A YEAR!

I'M NOT INTERESTED IN FRUITLESS ARGUMENTS ABOUT WHO'S CLOSEST OR FURTHEST OR WHATEVER!

WAIT, WAIT, WAIT! YOU SAID YOU DIDN'T WANT TO BUTT HEADS, BUT YOU'RE REALLY ARGUING YOUR CASE HERE!

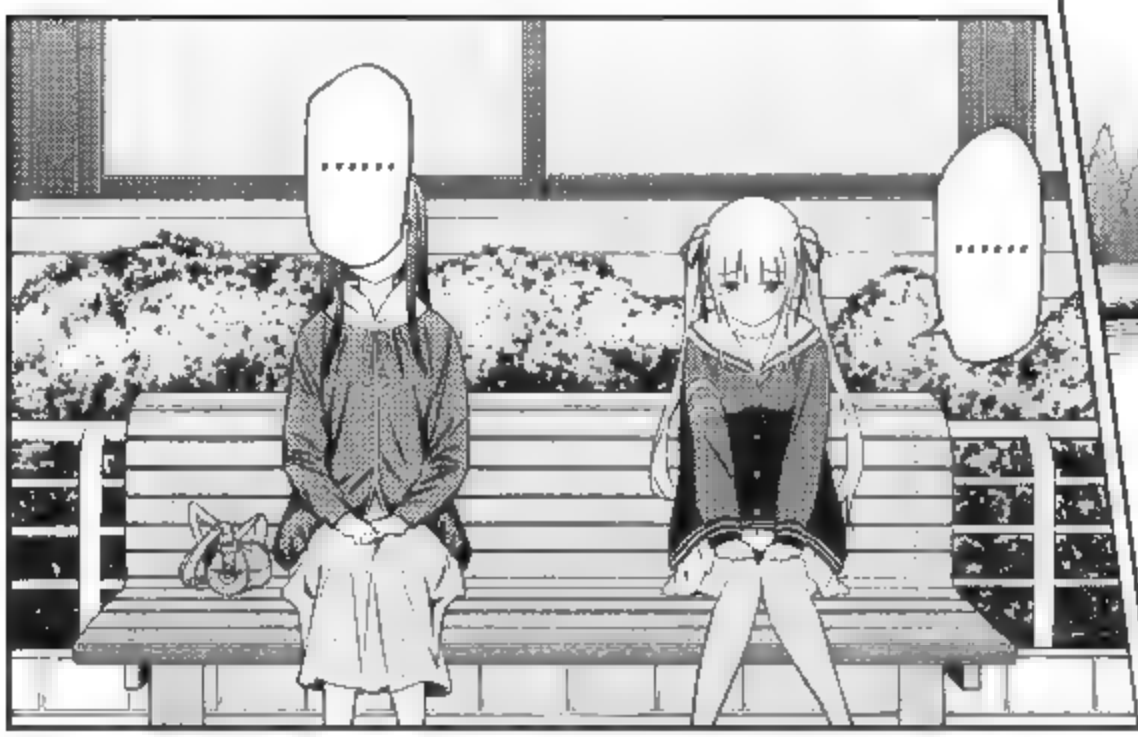
WHAT!? IS THAT WHY YOU THINK YOU HAVE THE EDGE?

ANYWAY, "CHILDHOOD FRIENDS" ARE ALMOST ALL PATHETIC LOSER TYPES!

BUT IN THE END, A COUSIN IS A RELATIVE, RIGHT? ISN'T IT MISGUIDED TO COMPARE THAT TO A GENUINE CHILDHOOD FRIEND?

IF YOU'D LIVED TOGETHER SINCE WAY BACK, THEN MAYBE I COULD UNDERSTAND IT.

OH? REALLY? YOU SURE THAT'S NOT JUST TOMOYA'S INFLUENCE?
I'VE LEARNED A FEW THINGS! SO I COULD GET ALONG WITH YOU OTAKU!
THAT'LL COME BACK TO BITE YOU IN THE ASS! WEREN'T YOU A NON-OTAKU!?
DON'T CALL ME THAT! I'M ERIRI TO YOU!
HANG ON! DID YOU ACTUALLY MEAN IT WHEN YOU SAID "SORRY," ERIRIN!?


.....
.....

...YOUR COLD.
MEGU-MI...

OH.
YEAH.
MM-HM. ...100%.
I SEE. THAT'S GOOD TO HEAR.

ARE YOU ALL BETTER NOW?

SHIIIIIIN
CHUSH

.....

.....

I'M SORRY, MEGUMI.

ER, UMM...

...THERE'S NOTHING TO APOLOGIZE FOR.

UHH, WHEN YOU SAY THOSE IN A ROW LIKE THAT, IT'S ASKING FOR TROUBLE.

I KNOW YOU DID IT FOR YOURSELF, THEN FOR TOMOYA, THEN FOR ALL OF US.

...WELL, SEEING AS I WAS THE MODEL FOR THE HEROINE OF THIS WHOLE PROJECT, IT KINDA STUNG.

I KNOW HOW IMPORTANT THIS CIRCLE AND THIS PROJECT WERE TO YOU, MEGUMI.

YOU CONNECTED EVERYONE TOGETHER. AND COMPARED TO ALL-TALK, NO-ACTION TOMOYA, YOU THOUGHT OF THE CIRCLE WAY MORE.

...I FIGURE THERE'S NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT ON THAT FRONT.

YEAH. WELL...

YOU ...

...THINK SO?

HEY, YOU CAN GO AHEAD AND SAY IT, BUT I WON'T HAVE A DECENT RESPONSE, OKAY?

もじ NOJI (FIDGET) もじ NOJI

'COS I... I...

OOP! HERE IT COMES ...

MEGUMI, WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT TOMOYA?

OH?

ARE YOU FINE WITH THAT?

YEAH. WELL... YOU'RE DEAR TO ME TOO, MEGUMI.

WELL, I THINK WE CAN BOTH BE YOUR FRIENDS THERE...

RIGHT NOW, IT'S ENOUGH IF HE'S MY DEAR FRIEND.

NO.

I WANT HIM TO BE A DEAR FRIEND.

THAT'S WHY, RIGHT NOW, I'M HAPPY TO KEEP ON ENJOYING MY DAYS WITH ALL OF YOU.

GETTING TOGETHER WHEN WE CAN, RELAXING AND HAVING FUN, WORKING OUR BUTTS OFF ON THE GAME...

LATELY, I'VE COME TO THINK THAT'S A DECENT OPTION TOO.

I'LL BE DOING SERIALIZED COMICS, AND MAGAZINE COVERS, AND ILLUSTRATIONS FOR NOVELS...

OH, BUT NO WAY AM I DOING ANYTHING FOR UTAKO KASUMI'S BOOKS.

...UHH, SAVE A BIT OF TIME FOR OUR CIRCLE THOUGH, OKAY?

I'LL DO IT.

SOME TIME NEXT YEAR, I'LL GO PRO, NO MISTAKE.

"BLESSING SOFTWARE" IS DECLARING DEFEAT?

OUR BATTLE INCLUDES PROJECT MANAGE-MENT.

BUT THE BATTLE HASN'T EVEN BEGUN.

I'D LIKE TO SAY IT TOO, IORI...IT'S OUR LOSS THIS TIME.

...AND YOU APPROVE OF THIS?

I'LL SEE YOU AGAIN AT THE NEXT EVENT, OKAY?

BUT I INTEND TO TAKE ON YOUR CIRCLE IN SHOP SALES BEFORE THEN.

ERIRI... HASN'T LOST TO IZUMI-CHAN AT ALL.

SO, IN OTHER WORDS ...

I DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT INTO THE RING, SO I COULDN'T EVEN TOUCH YOU. THAT'S ALL.

YEAH.

PLEASE COME AT ME!

...OKAY! I'M HAPPY TO ACCEPT YOUR CHALLENGE ANYTIME!

PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
(CLAP)

PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI

PACHI
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
PACHI
END

BOOK: GIRIGIRI

PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
The ○○th Comic Market is now open.
PINPONPAAN (DING-DONG)
PACHI (CLAP)
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI
PACHI

What were you talking about with those two?

SIGN: GENERAL HQ

COMIC MARKET ..
総本部
STAFF ONLY

I'M GETTING TO GATHER LOTS OF INTEL HERE.

IN THE PREP COMMIT-TEE HQ.

Well done.

So in the end, you lost...

...Iori.

OH, NEVER MIND.

HOW DID YOU EVEN GET A COPY ...?

Did you actually try playing their game?

I don't think you can stand up against the flood that's coming.

BUT THE BATTLE HAS YET TO BEGIN.

I WANTED TO CRUSH THEM WHILE UNDER THE SAME CONDITIONS.

What they've produced isn't anything simple.

...SO NAIVE THEY SHOULD GIVE YOU A SPECIAL THANKS IN THE CREDITS.

YOU'RE FAR TOO NAIVE, IORI...

EVERY-ONE'S DONE A GREAT JOB.

IZUMI'S GIVEN IT HER ALL TOO.

I MUST SAY, I IMPRESS MYSELF. I MADE THE EXACT SAME PRE-DICTION.

It was at least a year too soon for something like this.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

About your sister...

...BUT PLEASE LET ME HANDLE THINGS FROM NOW ON.

I APPRECI-ATE YOU GIVING US THE RIDE...

Try not to fool around too much like you did this time, okay?

At any rate, things are going to get busier for me soon, so I'm entrusting our circle to you.

I'D BETTER GET BACK TO OUR TABLE NOW...

...WELL, THAT DEPENDS ON YOU, DOESN'T IT?

If you'll excuse me...
...Akane-san.

HEY, TOMO! SHOULD WE TAKE THE RINKAI LINE?

GAYA

GAYA (CHATTER)

HMM...

GAYA

OR SHOULD WE TAKE THE YURIKAMOME?

WHAT SHE SAID!

GUTAA (EXHAUSTION)

I CAN'T WALK ANOTHER STEP!

YOU KNOW, YOU TWO ARE REAL KINDRED SPIRITS WHEN IT COMES TO LAZINESS.

HOW ABOUT WE GO GET SOME TEA FOR NOW? WHERE TO GO...?

WE ENDED UP SELLING OUT IN UNDER THIRTY MINUTES ...

GOT IT! I'LL GO ON AHEAD, THEN!

MICHIRU! TAKE THE YURIKAMOME!

THEN SHALL WE STOP BY ODAIBA FOR A BREAK FIRST?

...YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE HER FRIENDS. YOU SHOULD HELP HER!

SHE'S NOT USED TO THE ROLLING CASE. SHE SEEMS TO BE STRUGGLING WITH IT.

TRAILING BEHIND US.

NOW, THEN...HEY, WHERE'S KATOU?

GARA

GARA

GARA

GARA

GARA (TRR)

GARA

KATOU! THERE YOU ARE.

YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO COME BACK FOR ME.

BUT I'M USED TO THEM.

IT'S FINE.

CAN I TAKE THAT FOR YOU?

YOUR OWN CASE IS EVEN BIGGER, THOUGH, AKI-KUN.

OH, OKAY.

GARA
GARA
GARA
GARA (TRR)

BY THE WAY, I SAW THE WEBSITE. THE ART...COULD IT BE...?

WE'RE SOLD OUT! I'M SORRY!

AND WHEN THE PEOPLE WHO PLAY IT REALIZE THE TRUE IDENTITY OF THE SCENARIO WRITER, WE MIGHT END UP WITH AN EVEN BIGGER RUSH OF CUSTOMERS.

WHEN I TALKED ABOUT OUR PLANS TO SELL THROUGH SHOPS, MOST PEOPLE ACCEPTED IT, AND SOME OF THEM WERE HAPPY FOR US...

...BUT SOME JUST ASKED STRAIGHT UP, "THIS ART MUST BE BY ERI KASHIWAGI, RIGHT!?"

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR YOU, KATOU, WE WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN ABLE TO TURN UP FOR THE WINTER COMIKET AT ALL.

.....

?
YOU SURE?

FOR WHAT I DID RIGHT AT THE VERY END.
...FOR WHAT ?

DOESN'T SHE REALIZE HOW MUCH SHE'S DONE FOR OUR CIRCLE?
AND...I'M SORRY.

NOTHING YOU COULD DO ABOUT IT. YOU MADE THE RIGHT DECISION, AKI-KUN.

SHE'S A RARE FRIEND TO COME BY, A MAIN HEROINE, AND MORE...

KIND AS ALWAYS, HER FLATNESS LETTING IT CALMLY FLOW PAST HER.

WE'RE GOING TO ODAIBA, SO WE NEED TO TAKE THE YURIKAMOME.

OH! HOLD ON, KATOU. IT'S THIS WAY.

I'M HEADING HOME FOR THE DAY.

SO I'M HEADED FOR THE RINKAI LINE.
I'LL BE SEEING YOU, AKI-KUN.

HUH?

AFTER ALL, TODAY'S NEW YEAR'S EVE.

I NEED TO BE HOME SOON.

BA (WHUD)

N—

NO, WAIT!

WHY?

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, AKI-KUN!

THIS IS THE FIRST TIME...
...I'VE HEARD KATOU'S VOICE LIKE THAT...

THERE'S NO POINT IN APOLOGIZING TO ME ABOUT US NOT MAKING IT IN TIME.
THAT'S NOT IT... THAT'S NOT THE ISSUE.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

WHY DIDN'T YOU CONSULT WITH ME...?

CONSULT WITH YOU...?

WHY DIDN'T YOU TALK TO ME ABOUT ANY OF IT?

ABOUT THE DEADLINE, ABOUT ERIRI, AND ABOUT WHAT WE CUT BACK FOR THE WINTER COMIKET.

YOU WENT TO ERIRI ON YOUR OWN, YOU DECIDED TO GIVE UP ON YOUR OWN, AND YOU BORE THE BURDEN ON YOUR OWN.

AND YET YOU NEVER TALKED TO ME ABOUT ANY OF IT.

I WOULD HAVE MADE THE SAME DECISIONS YOU DID, AKI-KUN.

... ABOUT PUTTING ERIRI FIRST AND FORGETTING ABOUT THE WINTER COMIKET.

I WOULDN'T HAVE GONE AGAINST YOU...

DID YOU THINK I WOULD TELL YOU TO PUT WINTER COMIKET AHEAD OF ERIRI?

DID YOU THINK THAT I WOULDN'T AGREE TO ANY OF THAT, AKI-KUN?

'COS IF YOU DID... IT KIND OF...
... UPSETS ME.

AND I DO THINK OF YOU AS MY FRIEND.

GARA (TRR)

I BELIEVE YOU MADE THE RIGHT CHOICES, AKI-KUN.

KATOU DOES NOT CRY...

IT'S 'COS I CONSIDER YOU A FRIEND THAT I STILL CAN'T DIGEST WHAT YOU DID.

BUT I CAN'T FORGIVE YOU.

...MUCH LESS CRY LIKE ERIRI DOES. AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHY...

I'M ACTING JUST LIKE RURI RIGHT NOW.

...I'M SORRY.

ODD. SOMETHING'S DIFFERENT ABOUT ME.

...HER FIRST REBELLION CAUSED A DULL PAIN,

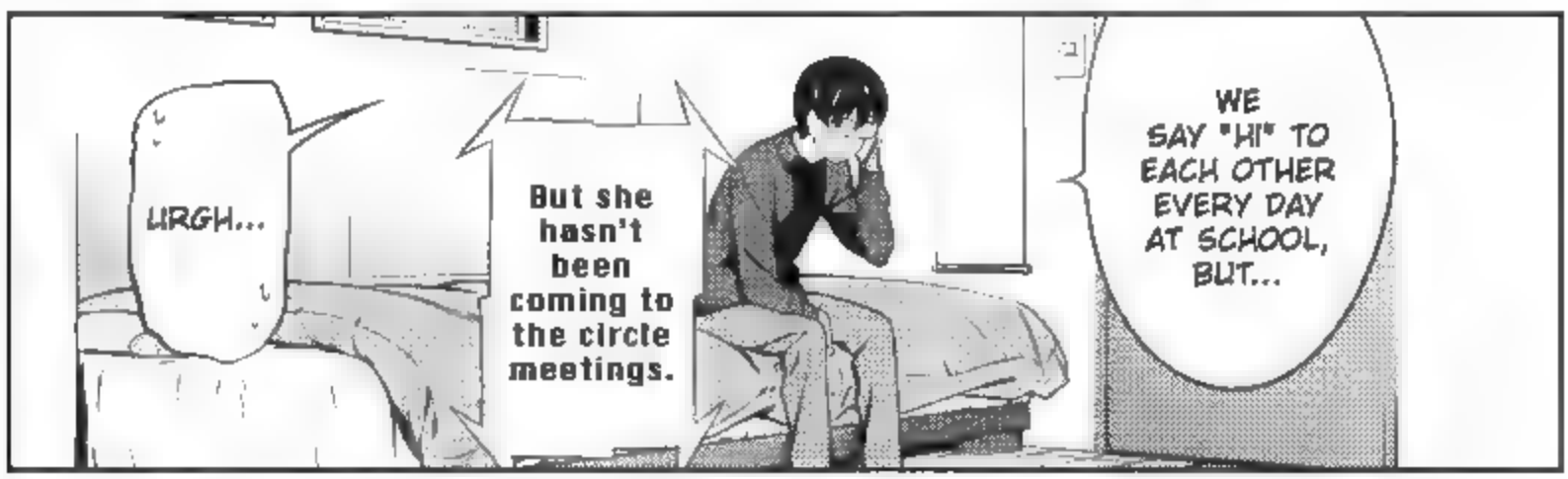
LIKE BEING PRICKED BY A POINTED TREE BRANCH.

END

WHY ARE YOU APOLO-GIZING ...?
I'M THE ONE...
...WHO SHOULD BE SAYING THAT, HUNDREDS OF TIMES OVER.

CHAPTER
36
AND SO CAME THE NEW YEAR, FOLLOWED BY FEBRUARY.

SO HAVE YOU HAD A TALK WITH MEGUMI YET?



COULD SHE BE SOMEONE WHO GETS DIFFICULT WHEN HOLDING A GRUDGE?

BUT BEFORE ALL THIS, SHE ALWAYS JUST WENT WITH THE FLOW.

SORRY. I'VE GOT SOME ERRANDS TO RUN.

LET'S GO GRAB A CUP OF TEA.

BUT SHE INDEED STOPPED COMING TO CIRCLE MEETINGS.

NOT ONLY THAT...

WELL, ANYWAY, IT'S MY PROBLEM TO DEAL WITH.

MORE IMPOR-TANTLY ...

...you need to get the art for the rerelease package done quick, Eriri.

DO WE REALLY NEED A NEW PACKAGE FOR THE RERELEASE?

...LISTEN, TOMOYA.

20XX/XX/XX (xxx) XX:XX

The balance of the figures, the interpretation...The feel is somewhat altered, but any way you look at it, this has to be by Eri Kashiwagi!

I'm convinced they used a pro writer using a pennname. But I just can't figure out who...Hm. But I feel like I've read this person's stuff somewhere before.

Category: Doujin

AROUND LAST YEAR'S END AND THE NEW YEAR, THE CONTENTS OF OUR GAME AND ITS DEGREE OF POLISH BECAME A HOT TOPIC ON THE NET.

No. 256 (no subject)
Anonymous 20HH/HH/HH HH:HH
Doujin games have gotten really sophisticated lately. I really like the person who did the vocals on this. The background music is really atmospheric too. It alone almost brought me to tears.

No. 257 (no subject)
Anonymous 20HH/HH/HH

AND THE THOUSAND COPIES WE SOLD WHOLESALE TO DOUJIN SHOPS SOLD OUT ON THE SAME DAY, SO WE PROMPTLY GOT ORDERS FOR AN ADDITIONAL FIVE THOUSAND UNITS.

THERE WERE SO MANY ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST THE GRAND ROUTE, CAUSING EVEN MORE DEBATE EVERY DAY THERE WERE PEOPLE WRITING ABOUT CHERRY BLESSING.

SIGN: TORANOHANA

FOR THOSE, ERIRI SAID SHE WANTED TO DO A "THANK YOU FOR MAKING US A MAJOR HIT" RE-RELEASE PACKAGE.

I WENT TO ALL THE TROUBLE OF DEVELOPING A NEW STYLE, AFTER ALL!

THIS OLD ART EMBAR-RASSES ME.

Once I'm done with this artwork, how about we go somewhere for fun?

Hey, Tomoya.

YEAH?

Okay.

NO. I'LL JUST TRY A LITTLE HARDER.

IS THE DEADLINE TOO TIGHT? IT'S JUST A STORE ORDER. WE CAN ALWAYS PUSH IT BACK, YOU KNOW?

Anyway, do you want to go or not?

THAT'S WAY TOO LOW A FREQUENCY...

I do get the urge to go out sometimes, about once a year.

WELL, AS LONG AS ACTUALLY GOING OUTSIDE ISN'T TOO MUCH OF A HASSLE FOR YOU.

Ah-ha-ha! Of course!

I'LL PASS ON THE NASU HIGHLAND, THANKS.

ONCE YOU ARE, WE CAN HANG OUT IN AKIHABARA OR THE NASU HIGHLAND.

WELL, EITHER WAY, IT'S NOT HAPPENING UNTIL AFTER YOU'RE DONE.

COME TO THINK OF IT, I'VE BEEN PHONING ERIRI ABOUT ONCE EVERY OTHER DAY.
.....

OKAY, LATER.
Well, that's about it for me. See ya.

HNGH!
THESE MEMBERS WILL CREATE A NEW WORK AGAIN SOMEDAY!
HMF!
...BUT IT'LL KEEP GOING, AND IT'LL BE FUN.
OUR CIRCLE STILL HAS LOTS OF ISSUES...
DESPITE ALL THAT'S HAPPENED... WE CAN JUST CHAT NOW, LIKE THIS.

STRANGE ...
I COULD DRAW BEFORE, BUT...

SEVERAL DAYS LATER
...
MORNING.
OH!
HEY.
WELL, UH, YOU COULD'VE GONE ON AHEAD WITHOUT ME.
PATAN (BTAM)
YOU'RE THREE MINUTES LATER THAN YESTERDAY. I THOUGHT I'D FREEZE TO DEATH.
...I'M SORRY.
GI (GLARE)
...!
LET'S BE OFF, THEN, TOMOYA!
AS LONG AS YOU UNDER-STAND!

ABOUT YOUR PROGRESS ON THE PACKAGE ART... SEE, IF YOU DON'T COME UP WITH THE ROUGHS SOMETIME SOON, THINGS COULD GET DICEY...

HM?

OH, BY THE WAY, ERIRI....

YUP! LEAVE IT TO ME!

GU (GRIP)

WHAT THE—? PRIVATELY ?

AFTER ALL, RIGHT NOW, I'M SATISFIED BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY!

I'LL HAVE IT DONE BY THE END OF THIS WEEK, LICKETY-SPLIT!

WELL, ANYWAY, JUST A BIT LONGER.

...I BELIEVE YOU, OKAY?

COLD AGAIN TODAY, HUH...?

?

TURNSTILE: IC CARDS ONLY

IC

FIVE METERS BEYOND THE RADIUS OF YOU TWO ANYWAY.

ZAWA (MURMUR)

H-HOW RARE FOR HER TO SPEAK TO ME IN PUBLIC!

JIRO (STARE)

じろ

It's Sawamura-san. So she really is friends with the otaku.

FIRST TIME I'VE EVER SEEN KASUMIGAOKA LOOKING FRIENDLY.

HISO (WHISPER)

ひそ

..... IS THIS GLOOMY GIRL STANDING HERE WAITING JUST SO SHE CAN GET IN OUR WAY?

YOU'VE NEVER WALKED TO SCHOOL WITH TOMOYA!

UTAHA-SENPAI .....

...WITH YOU.

BUT WE'LL BE PARTING PRETTY SOON, RINRI-KUN.

SO, ONE LAST TIME, I WANTED TO MORE DEEPLY ENGRAVE INTO MY MIND THE MEMORY OF WALKING THE SAME ROAD TOGETHER FOR THE PAST THREE YEARS...

QUIT MAKING A SOUND ARGUMENT JUST TO MESS WITH ME WHEN I'M IN TROUBLE! YOU DON'T EVEN BELIEVE WHAT YOU'RE SAYING!

WE ALL SHARE OUR TROUBLES, AND WE ALL REJOICE IN OUR SUCCESSES. THAT'S THE TRUE JOY OF BEING IN A DOUJIN GROUP, ISN'T IT?

GYU (SQUISH)

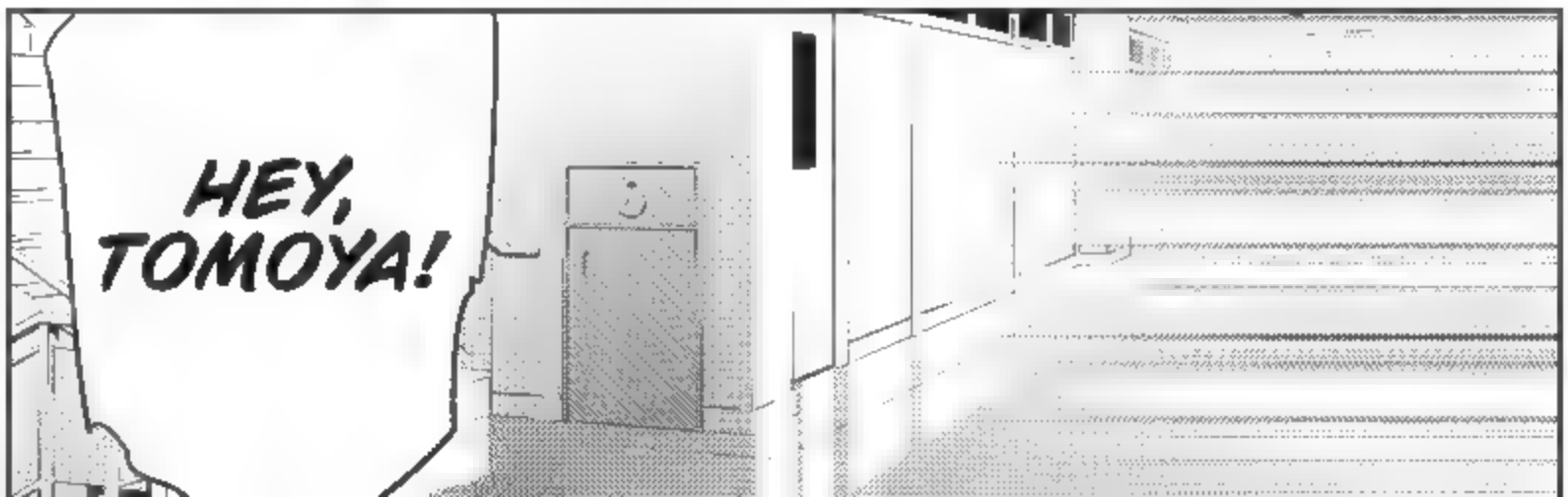
GUI (SQUEEZE)

GYU

GUI

HEY, YOU TWO! EVERY-BODY'S STARING!

THE WAY THEY'RE SANDWICHING ME IN WHILE THEY ARGUE... THIS HAS TO LOOK LIKE...!



UGH, THIS IS SUCH A PAIN...!

GRR!

Uh!

LATELY, THE MERE FACT THAT YOU'VE BEEN SEEN WITH SAWAMURA-SAN HAS THE WHOLE SCHOOL TALKING, AND NOW KASUMIGAOKA-SENPAI TODAY TOO!?

JUST WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT THIS MORNING !?

...OH!

M-MORNING, KATOU.

GOOD MORNING, AKI-KUN.

...AND SHE LEAVES WITHIN A MINUTE OF CLASSES ENDING. ALWAYS WITHOUT FAIL, SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR.
SHE ARRIVES AT SCHOOL JUST ONE MINUTE BEFORE THE FIRST BELL...
...RIGHT.

SO SHE'LL LIKELY SKIP THE CIRCLE MEETING AGAIN.
ALL TOO CLEARLY, SHE'S DELIBERATELY REBELLING.

BUT I DON'T KNOW WHY THIS HURTS ME SO MUCH...
GARI (SCRATCH)
GARI
I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT...WELL, KATOU'S A HARD TO UNDER-STAND CHARACTER-TYPE...

THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG!

EVEN MORE DAYS LATER

MOJI (FIDGET) もぢ

E-EVENING.

MOJI もぢ

MOJI もぢ

H-HEY...

I-I'M SORRY FOR COMING BY SO LATE EVEN THOUGH WE'VE GOT SCHOOL TOMORROW.

IT'S FINE. I WAS GOING TO STAY UP UNTIL ALL THE LATE-NIGHT ANIME AIRED ANYWAY.

SO? WHAT'S UP?

U-UMM...

THE THING IS, SEE...

And she was almost at peak character likability!

STOP SAYING THINGS THAT COULD BE BE MISUNDERSTOOD!

AT LEAST DON'T CALL VALENTINE'S DAY "THAT TIME OF THE MONTH"!

TODAY IS THAT TIME OF THE MONTH!

BAN (WHAM)

H—

HERE!

...BUT I WAS KIND OF EMBARRASSED, SO...
ACTUALLY, I HAD IT IN MY BAG ALL DAY...
DOKI! (THUMP)
I—
I—
I SEE...
LATELY, ERIRI'S REALLY BEEN...
...SUCH A GIRL...

HUH? BUT IT'S NINE O'CLOCK. YOU ONLY GOT THE ONE BOX FROM ME?

NO. THIS IS THE FIRST ONE TO BE COMMEMO-RATED.

SO, DID YOU GET ANY FROM ANYBODY ELSE?

CLOCK: FEBRUARY 14

THAT'S A HUNDRED UNVIGINTIL-LION TIMES MORE OF A SUCCESS!

KI (GRR)

HEY! THAT'S STILL ONE MORE THAN LAST YEAR!

IS IT...?

...SI

I HAD HOPED FOR IT THOUGH!

EVEN IF SHE HAD COME, THERE'S NO GUARANTEE SHE WOULD HAVE GIVEN ME SOME.

...THE THIRD-YEARS DON'T NEED TO ATTEND SCHOOL ANYMORE.

YOU KNOW, I HAVEN'T SEEN UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA AT ALL TODAY...

...EVEN THOUGH, LAST WEEK, SHE WAS GETTING IN OUR BUSINESS LEFT AND RIGHT.

I'D HOPED FOR SOME FAMILY CHOCOLATE FROM HER THOUGH!

MICHIRU'S GOT SCHOOL. IT'S A WEEKDAY.

HUH? THE MOOD'S KIND OF...

HMM ...

WHAT ABOUT HER? YOU KNOW, OUR HEAD OF MUSIC, YOUR COUSIN, THE ONE WHO'S SO SLOPPY ABOUT LOTS OF STUFF...?

OKAY, SO WHAT ABOUT FROM MEGUMI, THEN?

AND, DIDN'T YOU TWO MAKE PEACE!?

I DIDN'T GET A THING FROM HER! IT'S ENTRANCE EXAM SEASON FOR IZUMI-CHAN!

ALSO, I DON'T WANT TO BELIEVE IT, BUT DON'T TELL ME YOU GOT SOMETHING FROM THAT EVIL BOSS LADY FROM "ROUGE EN ROUGE"...

...I'D HOPED FOR GRATITUDE CHOCOLATE FROM HER THOUGH!

I WONDER. WOULDN'T SHE BE THE ONE MOST LIKELY TO GIVE YOU COURTESY CHOCOLATES?

.....
D-DUNNO...

I DON'T REALLY REMEMBER. SHE'S GOT NO PRESENCE AT ALL, REMEMBER?

WAS SHE OFF SCHOOL TODAY?

あせ
ASE (SWEAT)

...KATOU IS... LOOK. SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE ANY, LIKE, UHH, INTEREST IN THAT KINDA STUFF ANYWAY!

あせ
ASE

.....C-CAN IT!

WHAT THE HELL? YOU MEAN YOU STILL HAVEN'T PATCHED THINGS UP WITH HER?

IF YOU'RE SO WORRIED ABOUT IT, THEN DO YOU WANT ME TO TRY TALKING TO HER?

DOES IT LOOK THAT WAY? YOU REALLY THINK SO!?

GAGAN (THADOOM)

IT'S BEEN ALMOST TWO MONTHS! ISN'T SHE PRETTY MUCH NATURALLY EXTINCT FROM YOUR LIFE?

ガガガ

YEAH. WE CHAT EVERY DAY VIA LINE.

HAVE YOU KEPT IN CONTACT WITH KATOU LATELY?

DID SHE SAY "LINE"? ERIRI, BEHAVING LIKE A HIGH SCHOOL GIRL?

WELL, WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF BACK AND FORTH THOUGH.

THAT'S RIGHT. KATOU WASN'T DIRECTLY ANGRY ABOUT THAT.

ABOUT THE GAME NOT BEING ON TIME, OR US NOT BEING ABLE TO TAKE ON ROUGE EN ROUGE...

AFTER ALL, SHE'S STILL AS FRIENDLY AS EVER WITH ERIRI.

NO. WE SETTLED THAT.

...TO-MOYA.

TO THINK MEGUMI OF ALL PEOPLE WOULD HOLD A GRUDGE THAT LONG ...

COULD IT STILL BE ABOUT WINTER COMIKET ...?

BUT...

WHY DIDN'T YOU CONSULT WITH ME...?

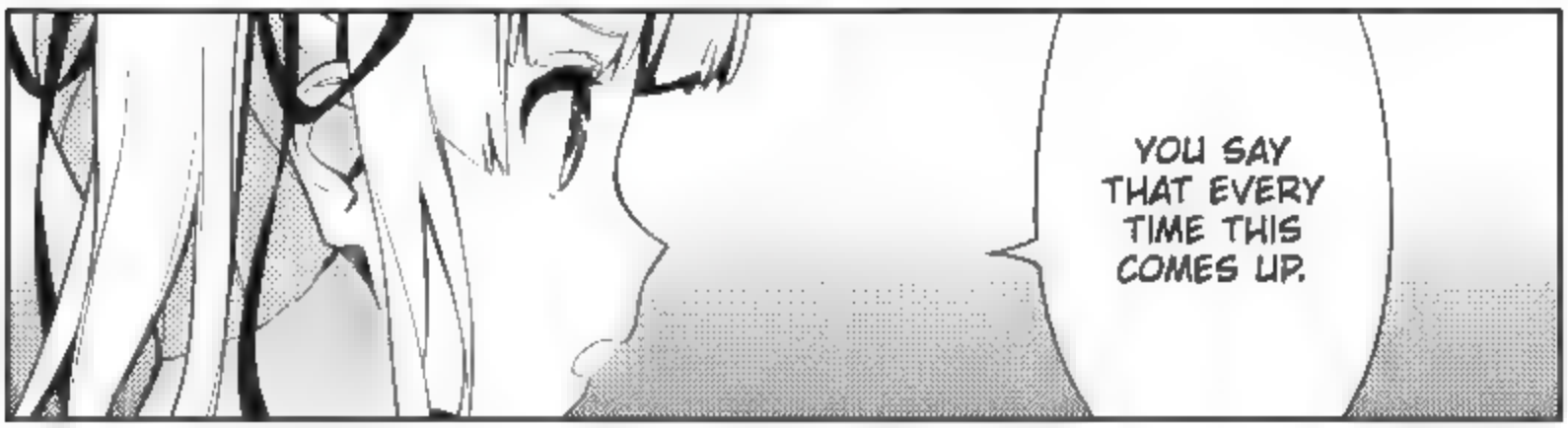
THE ATMOSPHERE AROUND HER AT THE TIME... IT CAUSES SOME SORT OF INDESCRIBABLE UNEASE TO WELL UP IN MY HEART, SOMETHING I WOULDN'T NORMALLY FEEL ABOUT HER.

THAT DAY, WE WERE ONLY ABLE TO HAVE ONE HUNDRED COPIES READY, AND THAT WAS MY FAULT AND ERIRI'S.

ERIRI IS TRYING TO SHOULDER THAT BLAME HERSELF.

KATOU FORGIVES HER FOR THAT SELF-ACCUSED WAR CRIME. SHE JUST DOESN'T FORGIVE ME. HER REASON SHOULDN'T BE DIRECTLY RELATED TO THAT FAILURE.

...LET'S NOT TALK ABOUT THIS ANYMORE TODAY.


YOU SAY THAT EVERY TIME THIS COMES UP.

WHAAA!?
COULD WE NOT TALK ABOUT THAT ANYMORE TODAY?
A-ANYWAY, MORE IMPORTANTLY, ISN'T IT ABOUT TIME YOU GOT THE NEW PACKAGING ARTWORK D—

OH. HERE COMES THE OBVIOUS STEAM COVER-UP.
Ahhh! This feels so good!

TODAY'S EPISODE IS ESPECIALLY AWFUL...WE SHOULD GIVE THIS SERIES SOME MORE EPISODES...

THEY'LL REMOVE IT FOR THE BLU-RAY RELEASE, BUT THIS ANIMATION STILL DOESN'T MAKE ME WANT TO BUY IT.

CARTON: GREEN TEA

HMM... I DUNNO. JUST WAIT A BIT LONGER. I'LL HAVE IT DONE IN NO TIME BY THE END OF THIS WEEK...

ARE YOU IN A SLUMP? YOU DID A ROUGH WHEN WE GOT THE ORDER FOR THE ADDITIONAL FIVE THOUSAND, RIGHT?

SO TO GET BACK ON TOPIC... WHAT'S WRONG?

ERIR!...

SHE SAYS THE SAME THING EVERY WEEK!

SU (SHFF)

IT'S FINE, IT'S FINE...

KORON (SLUMP)

BECAUSE, RIGHT NOW, I'M SATISFIED.

AH! YISS!?

...HEY, TOMOYA.

GORON (ROLL)

SHE DOESN'T MEAN FROM THIS, DOES SHE!?

SFX: DOKI (BADUM) DOKI DOKI DOKI DOKI

THE ORIGINAL PACKAGE ART WASN'T THAT BAD. I WONDER IF IT REALLY HAS TO BE CHANGED AFTER ALL...

BUT IT HASN'T EVEN BEEN A MONTH SINCE WE STARTED SELLING IN THE SHOPS.

WOULDN'T WE ACTUALLY GET COMPLAINTS FROM PEOPLE SAYING THEY COULDN'T GET THEIR HANDS ON THE OLD PACKAGE?

SO IN THE END... YOU DON'T WANT TO DO IT?

HUH? HUH? BUT YOU WERE THE ONE WHO—

YEAH, I'M THE ONE WHO SUGGESTED IT..."THIS OLD ART EMBAR-RASSES ME," I SAID.

.....

WHAT I'M SAYING IS, WHETHER I WANT TO DO IT OR NOT IS IRRELEVANT, OKAY?
IS A NEW PACKAGE REALLY THAT IMPORTANT?

SO WHAT DOES IT MATTER... IF WE DON'T SELL ANY MORE COPIES?
RIGHT?

WE'VE ALREADY SOLD A THOUSAND COPIES, AND WE'VE BROKEN EVEN ON OUR PRODUCTION COSTS, RIGHT?
WE NEVER ASKED FOR THEM! NEITHER ME NOR UTAHA KASUMIGAOKA EITHER... NO MISTAKE, OKAY?
WELL, YES, IF I IGNORE THE FEES I OWE YOU AND UTAHA-SENPAI.

BORI (SCRATCH)
BORI

SETTING ASIDE THE NEW PACKAGING AND MONEY ISSUES, I WANT EVEN MORE PEOPLE TO PLAY OUR GAME.
HM .....?
Y-YOU KNOW, ERIRI.

AND MAKE THE FULL GAME AVAILABLE FOR SALE BY DOWNLOAD ONLY, SO PEOPLE CAN PLAY IT FOR CHEAPER. THAT WAY, THE PEOPLE WHO BOUGHT THE PACKAGED EDITION STILL HAVE AN ADVANTAGE.
WE'RE GETTING FURTHER AND FURTHER OFF TOPIC...
HMM. I GUESS THAT WOULD BE A GOOD COMPROMISE.

NO. THAT WOULD ACTUALLY BE A SLAP IN THE FACE TO THE CUSTOMERS WHO PAID FOR THEIRS.
OH! IN THAT CASE, THEN HOW ABOUT IF WE DISTRIBUTED IT FOR FREE?

THEN, WHAT IF WE RELEASE A TRIAL VERSION OF ONLY ONE ROUTE THAT YOU CAN PLAY THROUGH COMPLETELY?
RIGHT... I GUESS THAT IS TRUE, HUH?

...ERIRI'S BODY IS TOO WEAK TO CHANNEL THE GODS OF CREATIVITY...

I MEAN ...

IF SHE SAYS SHE DOESN'T WANT TO DRAW, I CAN'T ATTACK HER FOR THAT.

...THIS ANIME REALLY IS AWFUL, ISN'T IT?

...IT'S THE FRONT-RUNNER FOR DOMINATING THE DOUJIN SCENE THIS SEASON.

COME TO THINK OF IT...WHY WAS IT THAT I WANTED TO TRY TO CREATE THE GREATEST GAL GAME EVER?

WAS IT THAT I WANTED TO LEAVE PROOF TO THE WORLD OF MY EXISTENCE AS AN OTAKU?

OR WAS IT THAT I WANTED TO BRING MYSELF EVEN A TINY BIT CLOSER TO THE CREATORS I'VE ADMIRED SINCE FOREVER?

OR DID I WANT TO USE A WORK I'D CREATED AS A STEPPING-STONE TO GLORIOUSLY LAUNCH MYSELF INTO PROFESSIONAL OTAKUDOM?

OR MAYBE... JUST MAYBE .....

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

...HAS BEEN RENEWED FOR ANOTHER ANIME SEASON!

HOORAY!

HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRL-FRIEND...

THIS STRIP RAN SPECIALLY IN THE MARCH 2016 ISSUE OF DRAGON MAGAZINE AND APPEARS HERE AS A BONUS COMIC.

THE TRUE END ROUTE!

AND THE TWO OF US WILL VANISH INTO THE HORIZON IN A WHITE ITASHA!

EVER SINCE WE WERE KIDS, I'VE ALWAYS...

VURORORORORORORORORORO (VRRMMM)

SELECTED AS ONE OF THE 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE IN THE WORLD

AND...! AND...!

SUBJECT OF BIOPIC

CHARACTER DESIGNER

I'LL SUDDENLY BECOME JAPAN'S TOP CREATOR!

ILLUSTRATOR

IDOL MANGA ARTIST

WELL, WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU WRITING, YOU FANTASY-CRAZED, DOUR, DIRTY, SLUTTY WRITER!?

"Utaha-senpai! I mean, Utaha! I've finally realized it! That I love you, Utaha, as an author and as a woman!" "Oh, Rinri-kun... No—Tomoya!"

KATA KATA KATA KATA

GIVE UP.

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

IF I JUST TAKE THIS IDEA TO MARUTO-SENSEI AND THE DIREC-TORS...!

KATA (TAK)

I EXPECT THEY STARTED PRELIMINARY STORY MEETINGS AGES AGO.

SFX: GO (RUMBLE) GO GO GO GO GO GO GO GO GO GO

YIKES!

LOOK FOR-WARD TO IT!

UH, FOR ALL THE EXCITING ANIME INFO, PLEASE CHECK OUT *DRAGON MAGAZINE*!

YUP. I CAN FORETELL THAT, AT LEAST.

HEY, TOMO, IT'S STILL GONNA BE JUST LIKE THIS NEXT SEASON, ISN'T IT!

UTAHA KASUMI-GAOKA!!

I DON'T NEED TO HEAR THIS FROM SOME FANTA-SIZING, LEG-SPREADING ERO-MANGA MASTER!

THE END

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

How to Raise a Boring Girlfriend

THE "MEGU-TAN, IF YOU CAN'T HAVE A PERSONALITY THAT STANDS OUT RIGHT AWAY, THEN WHY NOT WORK ON YOUR APPEARANCE FIRST?" SECTION ☆
PART 7
BIKINI ARMOR

TRANSLATION NOTES

PAGE 34
Zousui is a thin vegetable and rice porridge. Like many porridge dishes, it is commonly served to people when they are sick.

PAGE 38
Udon is a Japanese noodle made from wheat flour. It is cut thicker than most other types of noodles.

Soba is a Japanese noodle made from buckwheat flour. It is cut thinner than udon.

***Nabeyaki* udon** is a hot pot noodle dish made from udon that commonly includes chicken, fish cakes, mushrooms, vegetables, as well as egg and tempura shrimp.

PAGE 46
Christmas in Japan is generally not seen as a religious holiday. Instead, it is considered a day for couples, somewhat similar to Valentine's Day.

PAGE 49
The building pictured here is Tokyo Big Sight, the massive convention center where Comic Market is held.

PAGE 58
Kameda Café is a reference to the Japanese coffee shop chain Komeda Coffee. The sign for Komeda Coffee features a turtle—*kame* means "turtle" in Japanese.

COMMON HONORIFICS
no honorific: Indicates familiarity or closeness; if used without permission or reason, addressing someone in this manner would constitute an insult.
-san: The Japanese equivalent of Mr./Mrs./Miss. If a situation calls for politeness, this is the fail-safe honorific.
-sama: Conveys great respect; may also indicate that the social status of the speaker is lower than that of the addressee.
-kun: Used most often when referring to boys, this indicates affection or familiarity. Occasionally used by older men among their peers, but it may also be used by anyone referring to a person of lower standing.
-chan (also *-tan*): An affectionate honorific indicating familiarity used mostly in reference to girls; also used in reference to cute persons or animals of either gender.
-senpai: An honorific used to address upperclassmen or more experienced coworkers.
-sensei: A respectful honorific for teachers, artists, or high-level professionals.

PAGE 10
While doujin goods are typically first sold at events such as Comic Market, it is common to continue to sell them through specialty doujin shops.

PAGE 33
Peyou●g is a reference to Peyoung, a brand of Japanese instant *yakisoba*. Peyoung comes in a variety of flavors, including exotic ones such as peperoncino and chocolate.

***Tonkotsu* ramen** is a style of ramen where the broth is made from pork bone (*tonkotsu*).

TRANSLATION NOTES

PAGE 68
The **childhood friend** is a character archetype in anime, manga, and games who typically has a close bond with the main character due to knowing each other as kids. While once a very dominant archetype, especially in the mid 1990s to early 2000s (and the one most likely to become the canon girlfriend), they have become less popular in recent years.

PAGE 81
The title of the book Megumi is reading, ***Girigiri***, is a play on the word *girigiri* ("cutting it close") and *giri* ("obligation").

PAGE 87
The **Rinkai Line** and the **Yurikamome Line** are two different rail services that go from Tokyo Big Sight to Odaiba in Japan. The two lines are owned by competing railway companies.

PAGE 108
Toranohana (literally "the tiger's flower") is a parody of Toranoana ("the tiger's den"), a popular chain of doujin shops in Japan. The name Toranoana originally came from the villainous organization of evil wrestlers in the wrestling manga *Tiger Mask*.

PAGE 112
"Listen. Don't be writing my name in any evil notebooks, okay?" Tomoya is referencing the manga *Death Note*, where a high school boy obtains a mysterious notebook that allows him to kill anyone in the world by writing their names into the book.

PAGE 119
While anime in Japan can be seen at all hours of the day, **late-night anime** (aired midnight or later) are typically the shows most commonly designed to appeal to hardcore otaku.

PAGE 120
"Today is that time of the month!" In the Japanese language version, Eriri calls Valentine's Day "that day," a common euphemism for when a girl is on her period.

In Japan, **Valentine's Day** is an occasion for girls to give chocolate to boys, instead of the other way around.

PAGE 122–123
While the traditional distinctions for Valentine's Day chocolates are **courtesy chocolates** (given to friends out of obligation) and romantic chocolates, the categories have expanded over the years to include **family chocolates** (given to family members), **gratitude chocolates** (given as thanks for a favor), and more.

PAGE 125
Line is a messaging app popular in Japan that was first released in 2011. One of its signature features is the ability to purchase digital stickers that can be used in chats.

TRANSLATION NOTES

PAGE 162
Itasha ("painful cars") are motor vehicles garishly covered in large anime artwork, frequently cute female characters. A symbol of being a hardcore otaku, their name implies that they are painful cost-wise and appearance-wise.

PAGE 127–128
"Oh. Here comes the obvious steam cover-up." In order to keep racy elements within broadcast standards, anime bath scenes often feature lots of steam to hide body parts. However, this also provides incentive to fans to purchase the Blu-ray release, as these scenes will often be uncensored on home video.

PAGE 128
"...this animation still doesn't make me want to buy it." There are many terms for animation in Japanese, and the one originally used here is *sakuga*. Literally meaning "created images," it is used by fans to mean the quality of animation. Broadly speaking, "good *sakuga*" is dynamic, exciting, and well-drawn, while "bad *sakuga*" is incomplete and shoddy.

PAGE 150
Haru●● Mura●●●● is Haruki Murakami, one of Japan's most critically acclaimed living novelists, whose works frequently explore loneliness and alienation. Murakami's most famous works include The *Wind-Up Bird Chronicle* and *1Q84*. If Utaha were able to surpass Murakami, she'd become one the most successful Japanese writers ever.

PAGE 152–153
In Japanese high school graduation ceremonies, it is common for the top graduating student to give a **valedictory speech** known as *touji*. This is followed by a **farewell speech** given by the best non-graduating students to the graduating class, known as *souji*.

HOW TO RAISE A BORING GIRLFRIEND 7

TAKESHI MORIKI
Original Story: FUMIAKI MARUTO
Character Design: KUREHITO MISAKI

Translation: Kumar Sivasubramanian
Translation Consultant: Chitoku Teshima
Lettering: Phil Christie

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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CHAPTER
37

HERE, RINRI-KUN!

IT'S A LITTLE LATE, BUT IT'S VALENTINE'S CHOCOLATE FOR YOU.

WILL YOU ACCEPT IT?

TH-TH-THANK YOU...

ALSO, BECAUSE I DIDN'T HAVE MUCH TIME, I HAD TO JUST BUY THEM FROM A NEARBY SHOP...

IT WOULD'VE BEEN NICE IF I COULD'VE MADE EACH AND EVERY ONE BY HAND, THOUGH, IMBUING THEM WITH SPELLS AND MIXING ONE OF MY HAIRS INTO EACH ONE.

YOU DON'T NEED TO GO THAT FAR!

I'M REALLY SORRY. I HAD MEETINGS ON THE FOURTEENTH, SO I COULDN'T GO TO SCHOOL...

S-STOP. I'M HONORED JUST TO GET THEM...

KOFF!

NOW, LET ME SAY AGAIN...

PACHI (CLAP) ぱち

PACHI ぱち

KASUMI-SENSEI...

...CONGRATULATIONS ON THE RELEASE OF YOUR NEW WORK, PURE HEART HECTOPASCAL!

PACHI ぱち

PACHI ぱち

AND WELL DONE AT YOUR SIGNING TODAY!

YES, RIGHT! LIKE GUYS WHO BASH IT BASED ON THEIR VERY FIRST IMPRESSIONS WHEN THEY HAVEN'T EVEN FINISHED READING IT YET.

OR THEY DELIBERATELY SPREAD BULL ABOUT IT, OR REVEAL CRUCIAL SPOILERS.

YOU GET A LOT OF STRANGE REACTIONS WHEN THINGS FIRST GO ON SALE.

I'LL AVOID LOOKING AT ALL THAT FOR NOW.

WE SHOULD BE SEEING SOME REACTIONS ON TWITTER AND STUFF SOON.

I COMPLETELY AGREE, BUT COULD YOU MIND YOUR WORD CHOICE AND VOLUME!?

...BUT THEY JUST WANT THE ATTENTION. THEY'RE HAPPY TO SACRIFICE ANY CREATOR WHO PUT THEIR HEART AND SOUL INTO CREATING ART. I WISH THEY WERE ALL WIPED OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH...!

...THEY READ HALFWAY AND THEN WAIL AND RANT ABOUT HOW IT'S CRAP OR WORTHLESS. THEY EVEN SPREAD LIES TO PLANT A NEGATIVE IMPRESSION IN THE MINDS OF PEOPLE WHO HAVEN'T READ IT YET...

THAT'S ACTUALLY TRUE...AND EVEN THOUGH ANYBODY COULD UNDERSTAND THE AUTHOR'S INTENTIONS IF THEY READ THROUGH TO THE END...

THAT'S IT! NOW THAT YOUR ALL-NEW WORK IS OUT, THIS IS THE PERFECT TIME TO REVIVE IT!

THAT REMINDS ME. THERE HAVEN'T BEEN ANY UPDATES ON "TAKI'S HOME-PAGE" LATELY. I HOPE YOU HAVEN'T BEEN FORGETTING ABOUT IT.

CRAP! I'LL HAVE TO GET MY THOUGHTS UP ON MY BLOG SOMETIME TODAY...!

OOH, I WANT TO READ IT SO BAD! I CAN HARDLY WAIT...!

BUT, IN ORDER TO DO THAT, I NEED TO GET IT READ RIGHT AWAY!

...RINRI-KUN?

SOWA (FLUSTER)

SOWA

PARA (FLIP)

PARA

SOWA

PARA

COVER: PURE HEART HECTOPASCAL, UTAKO KASUMI

BIKU (JOLT)

WHAT MAN IN THIS WORLD PUTS READING FIRST WHEN HE'S WITH A WOMAN...!?

WELL, I'LL JUST SLEEP SITTING UP FOR A WHILE HERE LIKE I ALWAYS DO.

SO TAKE YOUR TIME.

THANK YOU, UTAHA-SENPAI!

OOOH! うおおおおぉ

NOW, THEN!

TIME TO REEEAAAD!

.....
GUH...!
SNIFF...!
RRGH...

WH...!?
WHAT THE
HELL!?

...PFFT!
PFFHEE-
HEE-
HEE!

TH-THANX...
SORREE...
...B-B-BUT
THE MAIN
CHARACTER'S
SUCH A
GOOD GUY...
THANKS...
DAAAAAA
(GUSH)
ぎぃぁぁぁぁぁ
HAVE A
TISSUE.
I SORT OF
ACTUALLY
THOUGHT
IT WAS A
COMEDY
WHEN I
WROTE IT
THOUGH.

BLLL
(BRRT)
HEH!

I ENDED UP NEGLECTING YOU FOR THREE WHOLE HOURS!

I'M SO SORRY!

HUH? NO...UH, THAT'S NOT WHAT...

OH, BUT I'M USED TO NEGLECT S&M...

テカー

TEKAA (SPARKLE)

THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS SO FUN, ENTHRALLING, AND HEART-WRENCHING!

IT WAS COMPLETELY SATISFYING!

WELL.

IT LOOKS LIKE YOU REALLY ENJOYED READING IT.

AS YOU ALWAYS DO.

YUP, UTAKO KASUMI HASN'T CHANGED ONE BIT!

YOU MEAN I HAVEN'T MATURED AT ALL?

NO, NO! I FELT THE QUALITY OF THE PROSE AND ITS ABILITY TO DRAW THE READER IN IS EVEN MORE AMAZING THAN BEFORE, BUT...

...TO BE HONEST, ME TRYING TO TALK ABOUT THAT TECHNICAL STUFF WITH A SMUG LOOK ON MY FACE ISN'T REMOTELY CONVINCING, IS IT?

WHEN I SAY YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, I MEAN SOMETHING ABOUT THE VERY ROOTS OF UTAKO KASUMI, LIKE HER TRUE ESSENCE ...

ANYWAY, IT JUST FEELS SO GREAT READING YOUR WORK! EVER SINCE METRONOME IN LOVE!

.....

OH, IT'S AMAZING! IT'S PHENOMENAL, JUST LIKE I EXPECTED, UTAHA-SENPAI!

THIS IS THE ONE AND ONLY UTAKO KASUMI!

...AND YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED EITHER.

I'M COMING TO THE NEXT SIGNING FOR SURE...

...AND THE ONE AFTER THAT, AND THE ONE AFTER THAT.

RINRI-KUN.....

WHATEVER I NEED TO DO TO WIN TICKETS, I'LL MAKE SURE I GET PICKED. YOU'LL SEE...

SO PLEASE DON'T EVER TELL ME YOU'RE SICK OF FANS PESTERING YOU, SO YOU'RE GOING TO QUIT MAKING PUBLIC APPEARANCES, OKAY?

THANK YOU...

BEFORE NOW, IF I SHOWED UP TWO HOURS BEFORE DOORS OPENED, I COULD GET IN FIRST. BUT THIS TIME, THERE WERE ALREADY FIVE PEOPLE THERE!

ANYWAY, TODAY'S SIGNING WAS ROUGH!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, SENPAI!?

SAY WHAT!?

GRR

AND IT WAS GREAT THAT I COULD BE EXCITED ABOUT UTAKO KASUMI TOGETHER WITH THE OTHER PEOPLE IN LINE TOO!

I WAS SO CRUSHED! BUT, IT'S AN INDICATION OF HOW MUCH MORE POPULAR UTAKO KASUMI HAS BECOME NOW!

BUT I CAN SIGN STUFF FOR YOU ANYTIME, YOU KNOW.

IN ANY CASE, IT WAS REALLY SELLING. NINETY PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE AT THE CASH REGISTER WERE BUYING PURE HEART HECTOPASCAL. I WAS REALLY ASTONISHED!

THAT'S BECAUSE IT WAS THE DAY OF A SIGNING...

PLUS, SALES HERE ARE A SHAKY INDICATOR AT BEST.
OH...! THAT'S RIGHT...
THE THING ABOUT WAGOUSHI IS IT'S ONE OF THREE SINGULARITIES, ALONG WITH AKIHABARA AND JINBOUCHOU, THAT BOAST THE TOP SALES OF UTAKO KASUMI'S WORKS NATIONWIDE.
AND, AS WITH HER PREVIOUS WORKS, IT'S THE SETTING OF THE NOVEL TOO. IT MAY BE ONLY NATURAL.

CATCHING THE FIRST TRAIN, LINING UP, THE NUMBERED TICKETING SYSTEM, A LOTTERY SYSTEM THAT'S ESSENTIALLY BASED ON THE NUMBER OF BOOKS YOU BUY, AND A TELEPHONE RECEPTION DESK YOU CAN'T GET THROUGH TO NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU CALL...
OVERCOMING ALL THOSE HURDLES AND FINALLY GETTING YOUR HANDS ON AN AUTOGRAPH IS WHAT GIVES IT VALUE!
ASKING THE AUTHOR 'COS YOU KNOW HER AND JUST SNAPPING ONE UP...TO CALL ONESELF A TRUE BELIEVER WOULD BE BEYOND IMPUDENT!
...YOU REALLY HAVEN'T CHANGED, RINRI-KUN.

IN ANOTHER WEEK, UTAHA-SENPAI WILL GRADUATE FROM TOYOGASAKI ACADEMY.

HA HA HA!

IF IT'S LIMITED TO WAGOUSHI, I FEEL LIKE I MIGHT EVEN OUT-SELL HARU●● MURA-●●●●.

Pure Heart Hectopascal Volume 1 Release

Utako Kasumi Sign

AND TODAY WAS THE AUSPICIOUS DAY OF HER NEW BOOK'S RELEASE.

SHE'LL BE GOING TO COLLEGE NOW AND FURTHERING HER CAREER AS A NOVELIST...

...WRITING MORE SERIES, GETTING MORE POPULAR, AND HAVING ANIME ADAPTATIONS. SHE'LL BE BUSY WRITING THE SERIES OUTLINES AND SCRIPTS TOO.

HER TIME, HER PLACE, HER STATUS... LITTLE BY LITTLE, SHE'LL GET FURTHER AWAY...

THAT'S JUST SO AMAZING, AND I'M SO HAPPY FOR HER...

...AND I HATE IT.

I KNOW IT... BUT I'M BEING FAR TOO SELFISH TOWARDS UTAHA-SENPAI.

I WANT TO ADMIRE UTAKO KASUMI FOREVER. I WANT TO BE A FAN TO THE END OF TIME. BUT I WANT TO STRIVE ALONGSIDE UTAHA-SENPAI TOO, AND ALWAYS BE FRIENDS.

BUT I WANT TO MAKE VIDEO GAMES WITH HER AGAIN TOO.

I WANT TO READ LOTS MORE NEW BOOKS BY UTAKO KASUMI, AND SOON.

I'M ASKING FOR TOO MUCH, HUH.....?

BRR!

SAY, SENPAI, ARE YOU COMING TO SCHOOL AT THE START OF NEXT WEEK?

I SEE .....

NEXT TIME I COME TO SCHOOL MIGHT BE FOR THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.

I'M NOT SURE...

ARE YOU COMING TO THE GRADUATION CEREMONY, RINRI-KUN?

WELL, IF YOU'RE READING THE VALEDICTORY ADDRESS, SENPAI, THEN I'D LOVE TO GO SEE IT.

FEELS LIKE IT'S GOING TO SNOW.

IF YOU'LL READ THE FAREWELL SPEECH, THEN I WOULDN'T RULE IT OUT THOUGH.

ARE YOU AWARE OF MY MARKS AND REPUTATION IN THE SCHOOL WHEN YOU SAY THAT?

AND YOU KNOW MY REPUTATION AT SCHOOL, DON'T YOU?

WELL, THEN, LET ME SAY IT RIGHT NOW...

CONGRATULATIONS ON GRADUATING, UTAHA-SENPAI.

THANK YOU...

I WON'T BE GOING TO THE SAME SCHOOL AS YOU ANYMORE, RINRI-KUN.

.....!

...TRUE.

WILL YOU TRY TO GET INTO MY UNIVERSITY NEXT YEAR?

NO WAY! I'D HAVE A SNOW-BALL'S CHANCE IN HELL!

I HAVEN'T EVEN DECIDED IF I'M GOING INTO HIGHER EDUCATION YET!

NOW THAT YOU MENTION IT, THAT'S RIGHT...

ANYWAY, BEING A UNIVERSITY STUDENT, I'LL HAVE FREE TIME EVERY DAY, SO I MIGHT BE ABLE TO FOCUS ON MY WORK AS AN AUTHOR.
WELL, I'LL KEEP WORKING ON PURE HEART HECTOPASCAL FOR A WHILE.
AND...
AND...
GOOD QUESTION ...
U-UTAHA-SENPAI...
.....ONCE YOU START UNIVERSITY, WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
...WHAT ABOUT OUR CIRCLE ...?
...BUT THESE ARE STILL MY HONEST FEEL-INGS.
I KNOW I'M BEING OVERLY SELFISH...
BUT EVEN SO, COULD YOU STAY IN? NOT JUST AS A FORMER MEMBER, BUT AS AN OFFICIAL ONE?
I KNOW THAT IT'D BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU TO SHOW UP EVERY DAY LIKE YOU HAVE SO FAR.

SOME RUMORS STARTED SOMEWHERE THAT I WAS THE SCENARIO WRITER FOR *CHERRY BLESSING*...
...AND A CERTAIN MAJOR GAME COMPANY IN THE INDUSTRY GOT IN TOUCH WITH ME.
!

.....
ACTUALLY, I'VE HAD ANOTHER OFFER...

I'M NOT SAYING YOU'D HAVE TO WRITE A WHOLE GAME! JUST ONE ROUTE, OR EVEN JUST A BONUS ROUTE!
YOU'D ONLY HAVE TO DO AS MUCH AS YOU WANT...!
WON'T YOU BE A PART OF THE TEAM ON OUR NEXT PROJECT?
.....

"NEXT PROJECT" ...?
DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING IN MIND?

AND WHO ARE YOU GOING TO GET FOR THE ART?

ARE YOU GOING TO SECURE SAWAMURA-SAN AGAIN?

HUH ...?

CAN YOU PULL THAT OFF?

W-WELL...

GIVE ME A WEEK!

SO WHEN WILL SHE GET OVER IT? HOW LONG DO YOU HAVE TO WAIT BEFORE ERI KASHIWAGI COMES BACK?

WELL...

N-NO, BUT SHE'S JUST IN A SLUMP RIGHT NOW...

ALTHOUGH, THAT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE CASE FOR A CERTAIN OTHER GIRL WITH LONG, DARK HAIR.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE END OF THE YEAR COULDN'T BE HELPED. SHE WAS DRIVEN RIGHT TO THE WALL, AND IT EVEN AFFECTED HER HEALTH.

SO I DON'T BEGRUDGE ANYONE FOR THE BUSINESS WITH THE WINTER COMIKET...

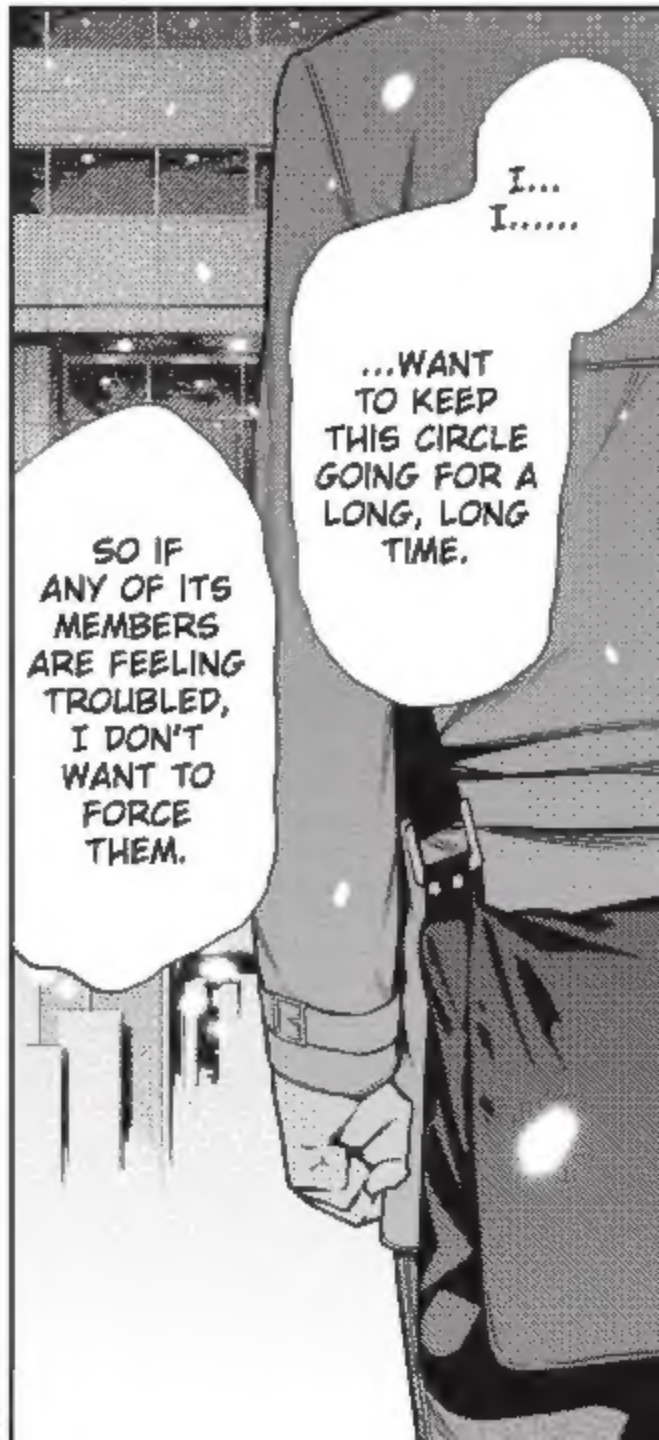
SHE'S NEVER BEEN THIS FAR FROM HER OWN ART.

DON'T YOU SEE? SAWAMURA-SAN HASN'T PRODUCED A SINGLE PIECE SINCE THE YEAR BEGAN.

ARE YOU OKAY WITH THAT?

BUT SHE'S TAKEN OVER A MONTH FOR ONE DRAWING NOW, AND THERE ARE NO OTHER EXTENUATING CIRCUM-STANCES.

SO IF SHE STILL CAN'T DRAW, THEN SHE WON'T BE ABLE TO MANAGE ANY MORE CREATIVE ENDEAVORS.



ISN'T THAT WHY I KEPT FULFILLING YOUR DEMANDS ...!?

SEN-PAI...

IT MAY MAKE ERIRI SAWAMURA GLAD...

...BUT I DON'T THINK IT BRINGS HAPPINESS FOR ERI KASHIWAGI.

...ARE YOU SAY-ING ...?

WHY ARE YOU SO OVER-PROTECTIVE OF JUST HER?

I WANT TO WORK WITH HER AGAIN IF I CAN.

I WANT TO MAKE SOMETHING AGAIN WITH ERI KASHIWAGI'S ART THAT SURPASSES CHERRY BLESSING.

I MAY HAVE MADE CONTACT WITH THE VERY ROOTS OF UTAKO KASUMI JUST NOW.

I NEVER KNEW...

...THAT SHE WAS SUCH A BIG FAN OF ERI KASHIWAGI'S WORK...

TO BE CONTINUED